



## Wavering Worldviews

There is a hidden war that has been waged for years and many do not realize that the battlefield is found in their own homes. It is the war of the worldview. I understand that this subject is not often discussed in churches today but the failure of discussion only hinders the revival of a Biblical Worldview in our country. Consider for a moment some of the issues that are affected by your worldview.

### Parenting

There is a new trend that is being experimented with by a couple in Washington state as they are attempting to raise their child species-less. **Please read that statement once again.** The couple has decided that as they decided to create a life-force then they would not do "it" the great injustice, in their opinion, of labeling it as a human rather they allow "it" to spend as much time in nature as "it" can so "it" can bond with whatever species that "it" feels most connect with. So far, "it" which is named "Echo" has bonded with tree squirrels, a Rottweiler, and birds.

### Ethics

Consider the moral imperative of modern day bioethics. Right now there is a new technique for editing genomes, CRISPR-Cas9. It advances biotechnology to the next level and raises concerns about the ethics of biomedical research and inspires calls for moratoria and new regulations. Indeed, biotechnology has moral implications especially as this technology is being experimented with in China to custom make your own baby.



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We could examine numerous examples but these two samples give us an overall understanding that your worldview impacts the way you view, interact with, and live in this world. This is also one of

### QUESTIONS

How do you define the term "worldview"?

Describe some current issues impacted by your worldview.

the reasons why there is such a great was between worldviews. Some individuals believe that your worldview should not matter but the reality is that your worldview ultimately effect the world around you as you interact or react to the world based on your worldview perspective.

## Defining a Worldview

Everyone has a worldview whether you realize it or not. This worldview shapes the way you view the world, develop your values, and interact with others. It is important that we begin our study by identifying the definition of a worldview.

**Webster's Dictionary** – A worldview is a comprehensive conception or apprehension of the world especially from a specific standpoint<sup>1</sup>

**Dan Story** – In the broadest sense, a worldview is the standard by which an individual, consciously and unconsciously, interprets *all* data so as to maintain a consistent and coherent understanding of the *whole* of reality. A worldview acts like a filter in that it screens and analyzes and categorizes all information so that we can make sense out of the world. It is the frame of reference from which we discern truth from falsehood, make rational decisions, and formulate ethical and religious values.<sup>2</sup>

**David Naugle** – A “worldview is an inescapable function of the human heart and is central to the identity of human beings as *imago Dei*.”<sup>3</sup>

**Walsh & Middleton** – A worldview is shaped by our culture, our experiences, and our personal backgrounds, including what we have read and heard. Worldviews are not systematic, nor even always conscious. They are “perceptual frameworks” or “ways of seeing.”<sup>4</sup>

As you observe from the different definitions, a worldview is simply the lens or filter through which you interpret the world. This filter develops from a longing to answer five simple questions that every individual encounters in this life. These questions are summarized by Frank Turek and Norman Geisler as follows,

### QUESTION

What are the major characteristics of a Biblical “worldview”?

1. **Origin:** Where did we come from?
2. **Identity:** Who are we?
3. **Meaning:** Why are we here?
4. **Morality:** How should we live?
5. **Destiny:** Where are we going?<sup>5</sup>

Due to different answers to these questions, different worldviews exhibit themselves in the form of different religions. Yet with all these answers there is still one worldview that remains true because it is based on the Word of God and not the philosophy of man. The question that a Christian is ultimately asked is simple, “**How do you know your beliefs or worldview is the only right answer?**” There is a twofold answer to this question as given by author Dan Story,

- First, worldview presuppositions can be judged for truth only to the degree that they can be verified by objective evidence. If they can’t, then there is no compelling reason to accept one worldview over another. To determine truth among competing

<sup>1</sup> Frederick C. Mish, “Preface,” *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003).

<sup>2</sup> Dan Story, *Christianity on the Offense: Responding to the Beliefs and Assumptions of Spiritual Seekers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1998), 39.

<sup>3</sup> David K. Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), xix.

<sup>4</sup> Brian Walsh and J. Richard Middleton, *The Transforming Vision: Shaping a Christian World View* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1984), 17.

<sup>5</sup> Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 20.

religious worldviews, we must base our decision on which worldview best verifies its truth-claims.<sup>6</sup>

- Second, one must develop a standard for determining truth that is acceptable and applicable for all people *regardless* of their existing beliefs. This standard must appeal to our innate sense of reasoning so that we clearly see the difference between *truth* as it corresponds to reality and *error* as it flows from a worldview that *creates* its own false reality. This standard will provide a needed measuring stick for verifying or falsifying all religious truth-claims.<sup>7</sup>

### Three Major Questions to Examine

Even though you will not find the term, worldview in the Bible we understand that the Word of God commands us to “take every thought captive (2 Cor 10:5) & to be able to “discern and discard false teachings, religion, and philosophy (Col. 2:6-8)” which is essentially a Biblical worldview.

This compels us as Christians to examine and identify a snapshot of our current culture and answer three major questions regarding the importance of a Biblical worldview for Christians today. The questions are as follows,

- **What is a Biblical Worldview?**
- **What are the elements of a Biblical Worldview?**
- **What are the benefits of a Biblical Worldview?**

We want to answer these questions with our culture in mind and the Word of God as our foundation that forces us to address the current state of our culture with regard to the topic of a Worldview. Consider some of these facts for a moment revealed by the Barna Group on March 06, 2009,

- Overall, the current research reveals that only 9% of all American adults have a biblical worldview<sup>8</sup>.
- Even among born again Christians, less than one out of every five (19%) have such an outlook on life.
- The numbers show that 7% had such a worldview in 1995, compared to 10% in 2000, 11% in 2005, and 9% now. Even among born again adults, the statistics have remained flat: 18% in 1995, 22% in 2000, 21% in 2005, and 19% today.<sup>9</sup>

#### Q U E S T I O N S

How is the model of a Biblical worldview being attacked within the church in modern day times?

What happens when a Biblical worldview is absent in the life of a Christian?

Some individuals might not think that this low percentage of those who hold a Biblical worldview really makes that much of an impact on their own life. Make no mistake, this view cannot be farther from the truth. The reason why is due to the fact that if fewer individuals hold a Biblical worldview then future of Christianity, the church, and the moral status of the nation will be redefined into a

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<sup>6</sup> Dan Story, *Christianity on the Offense: Responding to the Beliefs and Assumptions of Spiritual Seekers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1998), 42.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> For the purposes of the survey, a “biblical worldview” was defined as believing that absolute moral truth exists; the Bible is totally accurate in all of the principles it teaches; Satan is considered to be a real being or force, not merely symbolic; a person cannot earn their way into Heaven by trying to be good or do good works; Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth; and God is the all-knowing, all-powerful creator of the world who still rules the universe today. In the research, anyone who held all of those beliefs was said to have a biblical worldview.

<sup>9</sup> George Barna, “Barna Survey Examines Changes in Worldview Among Christians over the Past 13 Years.” (March 6, 2009) - <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/21-transformation/252-barna-survey-examines%20changes-in-worldview-among-christians-over-the-past-13-years#.Vc8nH3i-RUQ>

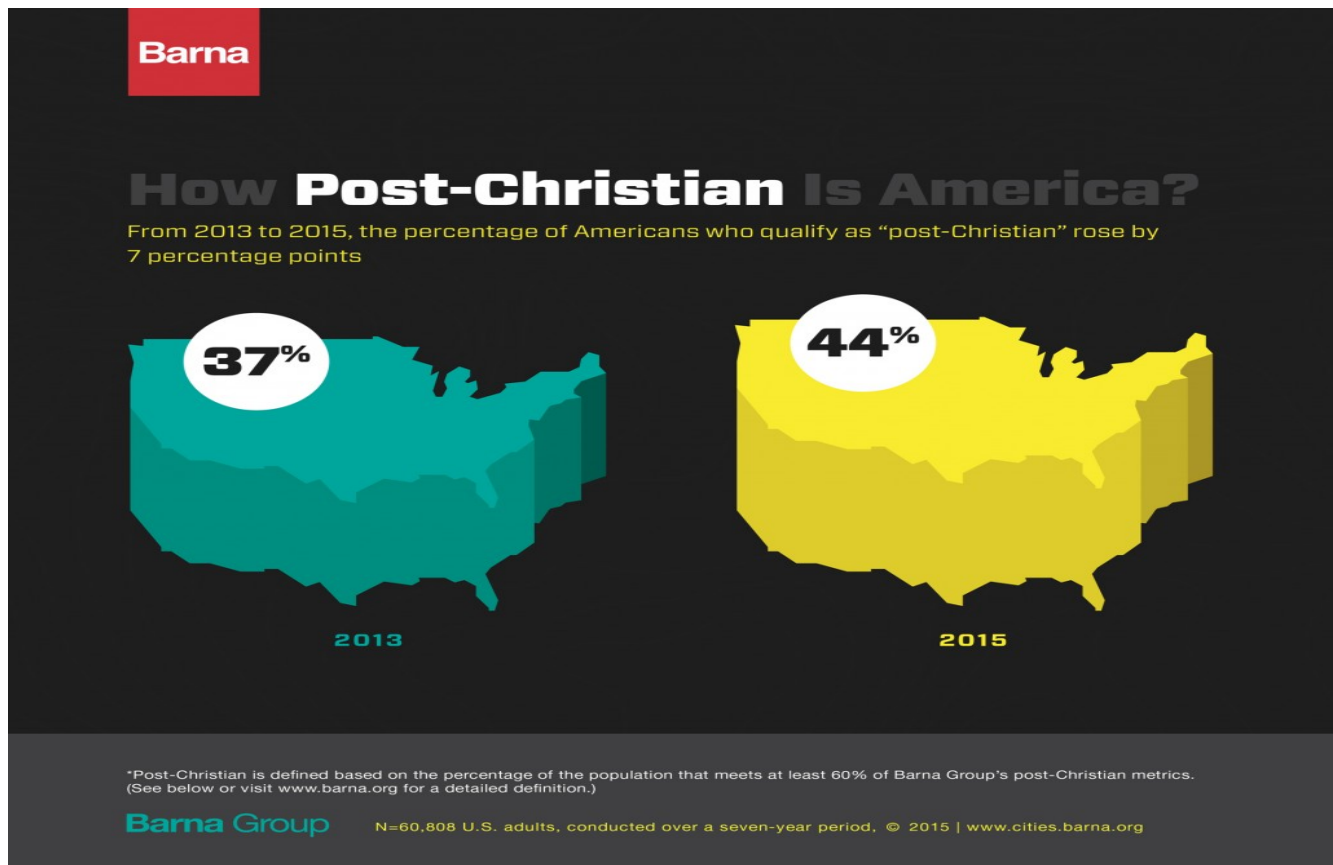
more worldly perspective. Look at the current results of this impact and forecast for a moment the impact upon the church, family, and country ten years from now.

- One-third of all adults (34%) believe that moral truth is absolute and unaffected by the circumstances. Slightly less than half of the born again adults (46%) believe in absolute moral truth.
- Half of all adults firmly believe that the Bible is accurate in all the principles it teaches. That proportion includes the four-fifths of born again adults (79%) who concur.
- Just one-quarter of adults (27%) are convinced that Satan is a real force. Even a minority of born again adults (40%) adopt that perspective.
- Similarly, only one-quarter of adults (28%) believe that it is impossible for someone to earn their way into Heaven through good behavior. Not quite half of all born again Christians (47%) strongly reject the notion of earning salvation through their deeds.
- A minority of American adults (40%) are persuaded that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life while He was on earth. Slightly less than two-thirds of the born again segment (62%) strongly believes that He was sinless.
- Seven out of ten adults (70%) say that God is the all-powerful, all-knowing creator of the universe who still rules it today. That includes the 93% of born again adults who hold that conviction.

#### QUESTION

How does the absence of a Biblical worldview impact the morality in the culture?

This has added to the fact that more individuals who call themselves Christians are pursuing a spiritual lifestyle all the while leaving the church, Biblical truth, and Biblical application out of the picture. These individuals are righteous in their own eyes and are labeled “Post Christians.”





## Question #1 – What is a Biblical Worldview?

The answer to the first question that we examine is found in 2 Peter 1:3 as we establish the definition of a Biblical worldview.

**2 Peter 1:3** – <sup>3</sup>His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,

There are two key terms that stand out in this verse regarding the importance of a Biblical worldview.

- **Divine Power** – His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness,
  - Whatever spiritual sufficiency believers have is not because of any power we possess in ourselves but our comes from the Lord **His divine power** (1 Tim. 1:12-16; Titus 3:5).
  - The **power** that operates in believers is of the same divine nature as that which resurrected Christ. That power enables Christians to do works that please and glorify God and accomplish spiritual things they cannot even imagine.
- **Knowledge of Him** – This term refers to a knowledge that is deep and genuine. Through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,

In light of the divine power and provision available to Christians, the question arises, “How do you experience all of this to the fullest?” Peter indicates that it is found **through the true knowledge of Him**.

Peter is referring to more than a superficial knowledge of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. He is referring to the knowledge that ultimately is given through the Lord to guide, lead, direct, and discern all of our encounters in this world, otherwise a Biblical worldview that is found not in the philosophy of man but in the Word of God and His ways. This brings us to the first question...

### What is a Biblical Worldview?

Literally a worldview is how you *view the world*. Your worldview consists of the values, ideas or the fundamental belief system that determines your attitudes, beliefs and ultimately, actions. Your worldview forms the basis of how you interpret reality. It is a lens through which you look at the world and shapes your moral opinions. It affects what you believe about God, marriage, politics, social structures, environmental concerns, educational requirements, economics, the raising of children,

- One illustration has been used over the years comparing a worldview to that of "an invisible pair of eyeglasses-glasses you put on to help you see reality clearly. If you choose the right pair of glasses, you can see everything vividly and can behave in sync with the real world. ... But if you choose the wrong pair of glasses, you may find yourself in a worse plight than the blind man - thinking you see clearly when in reality your vision is severely distorted." To choose the "right" glasses, you have to first understand and embrace a Biblical worldview.

#### QUESTION

How would you describe a Biblical worldview to your fellow Christians?

**Definition** – A “Biblical Worldview” is a filter through which a Christian views the world and dictates the belief system as well as the way the Christian interacts with the world. This provides a practical framework for each individual practically live out his/her faith as discovered through the correct interpretation of the inspired Word of God which serves as the unique source of Absolute Truth.

## Question #2 – What are the elements of a Biblical Worldview?

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The answer to the second question is found as we begin examining 2 Peter 1:4 as a catalyst to point us in the right direction in discovering the content of a correct Biblical worldview.

**2 Peter 1:4** – <sup>4</sup>by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

Notice within this text the underlying theme that resonates through the entirety of the verse. It is subtle enough that you may miss it if you simply look at the surface of this text.

- God, through the promise of His Word, has granted us **His precious and very great promises.**
  - These terms mean “valuable” and “greatest.” These words include all the divine **promises** for God’s people contained in the Old and New Testaments (cf. 2 Cor. 7:1), such as: spiritual life (Rom. 8:9–13), resurrection life (John 11:25; 1 Cor. 15:21–23), the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33; Eph. 1:13), abundant grace (John 10:10; Eph. 1:7), joy (Ps. 132:16; Gal. 5:22), strength (Ps. 18:32; Isa. 40:31), guidance (John 16:13), help (Isa. 41:10–14), instruction (Ps. 32:8; John 14:26), wisdom (Prov. 2:6–8; James 1:5; 3:17), heaven (John 14:1–3; 2 Peter 3:13), eternal rewards (1 Tim. 4:8; James 1:12).
- God, through the promise of His Word, makes us **partakers of eternity.**
  - First, **may become** is not intended to present merely a future possibility, but a present certainty. Believers **may become**, here and now, possessors of God’s own eternal life (cf. John 1:12; Gal. 2:20) by choosing to follow Christ. **Partakers** means “sharer” or “receiver” of eternal life.
- God, through the promise of His Word, makes a way for us to escape the corruption of this world.
  - **Corruption** denotes an organism decomposing or rotting, and its accompanying stench. The world’s moral decomposition is driven by sinful or “evil desire” (1 John 2:16). **Having escaped** depicts a successful flight from danger, in this case the effects of one’s fallen nature, the sinfulness of the decaying world, and its final destruction.

This is why it is essential to understand the central elements of a Biblical worldview correctly. If we want to understand the fullness of a Biblical worldview then we should look to the author of Creation as our standard. The central elements<sup>10</sup> of a Biblical worldview according to Jesus Christ are very simple,

- Jesus believed in God as the Creator of the world and human beings, and that He providentially rules His creation (Matt. 5:45; 19: 4; Mark 13:19; Luke 12:6-7, 22-31).
- Jesus viewed human beings as uniquely valuable in God’s sight, that they were created to love God and one another, and that their ultimate fulfillment in life is found exclusively in a relationship with Him (Matt. 6:26-30; 10: 31; Mark 12:29-31; Luke 9:23-25; 12: 13-21).
- Jesus held that all people are sinful, lost, and in need of salvation (Matt. 7:11; 10: 6; 15: 24; Mark 2:17; 7:20-23; Luke 15; 19: 10).

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<sup>10</sup> Matt Slick from CARM.org also provides a list of central elements of a Biblical worldview which can be found in Appendix A.

- Jesus believed in the existence of Satan and the demons and knew that their goal was to oppose the works of God in creation and redemption (Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:32-34; 3: 23-26; Luke 8:12, 26-39).
- Jesus understood that His mission was to fulfill the Old Testament, proclaim the Good News or Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and bring salvation to humanity and all the earth through His own death, resurrection, and ascension (Matt. 5:17-18; 12:28-29; 16:21-23; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; 10:45; Luke 17:20-21; 24:44).
- Jesus Christ understood the importance of preaching and teaching the Word of God correctly in order to expound on God's truth in a way that convicted and compelled application of the Word of God. (Mark 1:14, Matthew 9:35)

It has been observed by James P. Eckman,

CHRISTIANITY IS NOT ONLY a personal relationship with the living God through faith in Jesus Christ; it is a worldview. It is an entire way of thinking, covering not only theology, but how to think about ethics, history, science, literature—about everything. Because God has revealed Himself verbally in the Bible, Christians have the answers to the most penetrating questions of life.<sup>11</sup>

#### QUESTION

Why is the subject of a Biblical worldview a debated topic in some churches?

If we desire to develop and apply a Biblical worldview then we need to start with understanding a Biblical worldview according to Jesus then practice it accordingly. This keeps us in good standing with the Word of God as John states,

**1 John 2:6** – Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

### Question #3 – What are the benefits of a Biblical Worldview?

The final answer to the final question that we examine is found in verses 2 Peter 1:5-7 as we see the benefits of a Biblical Worldview for believers primarily but also for the world.

**2 Peter 1:5-7** – <sup>5</sup>For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, <sup>6</sup>and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, <sup>7</sup>and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

We observe that due to the power and promises of our Mighty God who equips us for every good work and provides us with the right worldview that we must make every effort to continue to cultivate and live out a Biblical worldview.

**Supplement** means “to bring in,” or “to supply besides” and implies making a strong effort to provide something necessary. Believers are compelled to call on all the Word of God and a Biblical worldview to live godly lives (3:14; cf. Rom. 6:22; Gal. 6:9; Eph. 5:7-9; Heb. 6:10-12).

Believers must carry out that effort with **all diligence** (“zeal and eagerness”), accompanied by a sense of urgency (cf. 2 Cor. 8:7).

**How do you do this? By applying these virtues in your life.**

<sup>11</sup> James P. Eckman, *The Truth About Worldviews: a Biblical Understanding of Worldview Alternatives* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 119.

- **Moral excellence** – It was such a lofty term that it was used for moral heroism, viewed as the divinely endowed ability to excel in heroic, courageous deeds. It came to encompass the most outstanding quality in someone’s life, or the proper and excellent fulfillment of a task or duty (cf. Phil. 4:8). The apostle Paul modeled the pursuit of such spiritual heroism: “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14; cf. 2 Cor. 5:9; 1 Thess. 4:1, 10).
- **Knowledge** – This refers to the divine truth that is the foundation of spiritual discernment and wisdom (Rom. 15:14; 2 Cor. 10:5; Col. 1:9; cf. Prov. 2:5–6; 9:10), the truth properly understood and applied (cf. Col. 1:10; Phile. 6).
- **Self-control** – This means “holding oneself in.” It was used of athletes who sought self-discipline and self-restraint, even beating their bodies into submission (cf. 1 Cor. 9:27).
- **Steadfastness** – This means patience and endurance in doing what is right (Luke 8:15; 2 Tim. 3:10; Titus 2:2) resisting temptations and enduring in the midst of trials and difficulties.
- **Godliness** – This means reverence for God (1:3; 3:11; 1 Tim. 2:2; 6:6; cf. 1 Cor. 10:31). It could also be translated “true religion,” or “true worship” and conveys the idea that one who has it properly honors and adores God (1 Tim. 3:16; Titus 1:1; cf. John 4:24; Phil. 3:3).
- **Brotherly kindness** – The companion of affection for God is affection for others (cf. Rom. 13:8–10; Gal. 5:14; 1 Thess. 1:3; Heb. 6:10; James 2:8). Peter undoubtedly recalled what Jesus had told the religious leaders.

Consider for a moment that we live in a world where “One-third of all adults (34%) believe that moral truth is absolute and unaffected by the circumstances. Slightly less than half of the born again adults (46%) believe in absolute moral truth.”<sup>12</sup>

More than ever before, we must add these virtues to our life in order to live out our faith in practical ways establishing the benefit of a Biblical worldview for Christianity and the rest of the world.

### What are the benefits of a Biblical Worldview?

- Re-establishes Absolute Truth
- Re-establishes Basic Biblical Morality
- Re-establishes Salvation through Jesus Christ alone
- It establishes the foundational truths to be used as an effective tool in *evangelism* to answer the questions and objections of the unbeliever.
- It establishes the truths needed for effective discipleship to equip and mature believers.

#### QUESTION

What are other benefits of a Biblical worldview?

## Conclusion

We have shown the evidence that our country is at a “Crossroads” when it comes to morality, leadership, and social justice. Now is the time for the country to turn back to the Lord in order to experience His blessings once again. Be a voice of truth to a dying culture and choose this day to honor Him with the life you live.

<sup>12</sup> George Barna, “Barna Survey Examines Changes in Worldview Among Christians over the Past 13 Years.” (March 6, 2009) - <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/21-transformation/252-barna-survey-examines%20changes-in-worldview-among-christians-over-the-past-13-years#.Vc8nH3i-RUQ>



## Appendix A

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### What are the elements of a Christian worldview?<sup>13</sup>

Christianity teaches a set of beliefs that form the basics of our worldview. Following is a list of some of the elements that make up the Christian worldview.

#### *An absolute God exists*

If an absolute God exists, then it means that God is self-sufficient and lacks nothing. If God is self-sufficient, then he needs no external cause for his existence. This would mean he is eternal. If he is eternal then he does not change.

#### *God created the universe*

If God created the universe, then he is all powerful -- since it obviously takes a great deal of power to create the universe. This would also mean that God is separate from creation and not a part of the created order. From the previous point where we see that God is absolute and unchanging, we could see that God's nature would be reflected in the created order. As a painter leaves a part of himself on the canvas, so God reveals himself in creation. Creation is, therefore, ordered, predictable, and dependable. This would mean that when Christians look into creation, they would expect to find a predictable, regular, and testable world.

#### *Man is created in God's image*

This means that God, who is rational and intelligent, has impressed his image upon the hearts and soul of human beings. Therefore, people can be rational and turn their attention towards the world and since they believe that the universe reflects God's creative nature, they can have confidence to look into creation and expect order. They can also expect that since they are made in the image of God, they have the ability to unlock the secrets of the universe.

Also, if man is created in God's image, then all people are worthy of respect and honor.

This would also mean that when a new life formed in the womb, it is human from the time of conception. Therefore, abortion would be wrong.

Furthermore, if we are created in God's image, then we did not evolve from lower primates. This would mean that we have purpose and are not merely the result of random development through evolution that is, supposedly, guided by natural selection. Natural selection works on the theory of survival of the fittest and this could have a very harmful effect on society if "survival of the fittest" is transferred into a moral principle. It would justify oppressing the weak and helpless.

#### *Man was given dominion over creation by God.*

This means that all aspects of the created order on earth are to be governed by man according to how God has revealed himself and his will for us in the Bible. Therefore, politics, medicine, art, ecology, society, economics, exploration, philosophy, mathematics, education, etc. all fall under the domain of human responsibility and should be considered realms for man to control -- under the wisdom and direction of God's revelation, the Bible (more on that below).

#### *Mankind is fallen*

The Fall of mankind through our ancient father Adam, tells us that at the heart of every one of us is a predisposition toward sin. Sin is rebellion against God and, therefore, it is a rebellion against what

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<sup>13</sup> Matt Slick, [www.Carm.org](https://www.Carm.org) as downloaded from <https://carm.org/what-are-some-christian-worldview-essentials>

is good. Sin has not only affected man's soul and body, but it has also affected his mind. Therefore, the Christian worldview would say that even man's best reasoning is touched by sin and cannot be perfect. Furthermore, since man is sinful and his heart's intentions are predisposed towards wickedness, we conclude that those in power are highly susceptible to corruption. Therefore, governmental systems should be developed with Christian principles in mind to help guard against that.

In fact, Christianity influenced the development of the Constitution and American government. Our founding fathers developed the judicial, executive, and legislative branches of government which are there to exercise a system of checks and balances over each other. Why? Because of The Fall, man has a tendency to gravitate towards corruption.

### *Jesus is mankind's only hope for redemption*

Because man is fallen, he is in need of rescue from God's righteous condemnation -- which is eternal damnation. Also, since he is fallen, there is no way he can redeem himself. Therefore, Jesus, who is God in flesh, died for us and rose from the dead. We receive his righteousness and forgiveness by faith. This basic theological truth means that Christians should then preach that good news of redemption in Christ to all the world. Therefore, one of the most basic Christian principles is promoting Jesus as the means by which we are made right with God.

### *The Bible is the Word of God*

Of course I have already mentioned the Bible, but the Bible is the inspired and inerrant word of God. From the Bible we derive the truths by which we govern our lives. It is from the Bible that we learn about God himself, his created order, the Trinity, redemption, about sin, salvation, hope, and what is morally correct. The Bible reveals the will of God for mankind, for the family, for raising children, for proper behavior in society, etc. It is from the Bible that we can learn the direct will of God.

### *God Provides for his creation*

It is from the Bible that we learn of God's loving provision for us. We know that God lets the sun and rain fall down upon both the good and the bad. We know that God causes the crops to grow and cattle to multiply. We know that though we live in a fallen world, God has promised that he will never leave us or forsake us. Therefore, we can rely on God's provision for us and should have confidence that he will continue to provide for our needs.

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