

A Christian Approach to Worldviews

Video Curriculum

Presentation Descriptions

This video-based curriculum offers a great introduction to the Christian worldview and to non-Christian worldviews. (1) It introduces the concept of "worldview" as a useful tool; (2) It presents the basics of Christian theology; (3) It surveys and critically evaluates non-Christian philosophies and religions; (4) It provides a Christian perspective on God, science, and ethics; and (5) it challenges students to live a Christian worldview with greater confidence, consistency, and impact. It provides over 22 hours of video instruction.

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Overview of Video Lectures

1. The Concept of Worldview (1)	12. Postmodernism (1)	23. A Christian Perspective on Science
2. The Concept of Worldview (2)	13. Postmodernism (2)	24. A Christian View of Ethics (1)
3. The Concept of Worldview (3)	14. Eastern Pantheism (1)	25. A Christian View of Ethics (2)
4. The Biblical Emphasis on the Mind	15. Eastern Pantheism (2)	26. Living a Christian Worldview (1)
5. Christian Theism: An Overview	16. The New Age Worldview	27. Living a Christian Worldview (2)
6. The Worldview of Deism	17. Responding to Secular Humanism	28. Living a Christian Worldview (3)
7. Secular Humanism (1)	18. Responding to Relativism	
8. Secular Humanism (2)	19. Responding to New Age Pantheism	
9. The Mood of Nihilism	20. Christianity and the Worldview of Islam (1)	
10. Existentialism (1)	21. Christianity and the Worldview of Islam (2)	
11. Existentialism (2)	22. The Infinite God of Christian Theism	

1. Worldview Concept, Part 1

Part 1 of a 3-part introduction to the concept of worldview. It begins with several cultural illustrations to show the connection between one's fundamental beliefs and one's behavior. It conveys and analyzes an initial definition for "worldview" proposed by James Sire in his earlier editions of *The Universe Next Door*.

The session highlights "worldview" as a set of beliefs about the basic makeup of the world. Worldviews attempt to answer the universal BIG questions of humanity. Different worldviews have different answers for those basic questions.

2. Worldview Concept, Part 2

This presentation uses a "Worldview Table" as an overview on different worldview categories that help us compare and contrast different worldviews. It surveys different approaches to worldview by James Sire, David Naugle, and James K. A. Smith. And it proposes a refined definition of "worldview."

Properly understood, a worldview is more than *mere beliefs*. A worldview involves the CORE of who you are (mind, attitude, speech, actions, and will). The refined definition of "worldview" makes a specific connection to the "greatest commandment" in Scripture—to love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30).

3. Worldview Concept, Part 3

This is the last of a 3-part introduction to the concept of worldview. This discusses some "worldview facts" and uses a variety of pictures to illustrate how a worldview functions. It also presents some *similarities* and *differences* between visual gestalts and how we should think about worldviews.

It concludes with a graphic overview of what a "biblical worldview" encompasses: Personal Integrity, Individual Involvement, Relationship Investment, Academic Influence, Cultural Impact, and Apologetic Interaction.

4. The Biblical Emphasis on the Mind

This presentation emphasizes that developing a Christian mind is not an option for a committed Christian. Loving God with our *mind* is part of the greatest commandment in Scripture. First, it shows how much the mind played a significant role throughout Christian history.

Second, it discusses how the Christian mind was lost in the 17th and 18th centuries, resulting in an anti-intellectualism where faith was identified with feelings.

Third, it examines passages of Scripture that highlight the importance of the mind. Specifically, it discusses Deuteronomy 6:5 (in a passage called the *Shema*) and its apparent difference from Mark 12:30. The presentation also includes an analysis of Romans 12:1-2, Colossians 2:8, 2 Corinthians 10:5, and Romans 8:5-7.

It concludes with a summary of six characteristics of a Christian mind, each with a biblical connection.

5. The Christian Worldview

This presentation provides a basic overview of the Christian worldview. It begins with a description of the religious confusion in the world, with many different religions and thousands of Christian denominations. But it focuses on "mere Christianity," a term notably used by C. S. Lewis. The presentation discusses basic historic Christian views on God and the Trinity, the cosmos (nature), humanity, ethics, knowledge, death, and history.

It concludes with graphic overviews of "Worldview Conflicts in the Bible" and "Worldview Conflicts Today," which gives a preview of the worldviews that will be discussed in later presentations.

6. The Worldview of Deism

This video introduces Deism, a view that arose in the late 17th century and early 18th century that accepts God as a Creator who does not interact with the universe he created. The universe is "closed" to God's involvement. It includes five sections:

1. Influences toward Deism.
2. Basic Beliefs.
3. Prominent Deists (e.g., Voltaire, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine).
4. Deism Today (e.g., the "moral therapeutic deism" of American teenagers).
5. Problems with Deism (especially in theology and in ethics).

7. Secular Humanism, Part 1

This presentation introduces the worldview of Secular Humanism, a view that rejects the existence of any God or spiritual reality. It discusses its historical background (including its ancient Greek precursors and Renaissance humanists), its key principles, and several key documents and publications.

8. Secular Humanism, Part 2

Part 2 connects the worldview of Secular Humanism to "modernism," which is illustrated by the Titanic and the movie about it. It presents its key principles and discusses key people like Bertrand Russell, Carl Sagan, Neil Degross Tyson, The Berenstain Bears, Richard Dawkins, Michael Shermer, Christopher Hitchens, and John Loftus (a former preacher turned atheist).

It concludes with several biblical connections to the ideas of Secular Humanism, including a brief analysis of the contrasts between St. Paul's message in Acts 17 and the beliefs of the Epicureans.

9. The Mood of Nihilism

This presentation provides an explanation of the nature of Nihilism--a worldview that emphasizes that *nothing* has any value, truth, or meaning. It discusses its basic principles, its historical background, and a variety of illustrations of the mood of Nihilism in music, literature, TV, and theater. It describes Nihilism as the "toilet bowl" worldview that is atheistic and pessimistic.

It includes references to Friedrich Nietzsche, Adolf Hitler, Victor Frankl, Malcolm Muggeridge, Stephen Crane, Queen, Wayne's World, Douglas Adams, John Cage, Seinfeld, Samuel Beckett, and Solomon.

10. Existentialism, Part 1

Part One includes two basic sections:

(1) Background

- Atheistic existentialism accepts the implications of Naturalism (atheism) but tries to transcend Nihilism.
- Existentialism historically began with Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) who reacted against rational philosophies and "cold" Christianity.

(2) Key Principles

- It rejects abstract philosophy.
- It emphasizes the "personal."
- It emphasizes freedom.
- It rejects any single explanatory system or philosophy as adequate.
- It stresses that "existence precedes essence."

11. Existentialism, Part 2

Part 2 briefly summarizes the key principles of existentialism covered in Part 1. First, it explains and illustrates the important existentialist principle that "existence precedes essence" and Sartre's idea that man must "define himself." Illustrations include Sartre's play "No Exit" and Taylor Swift's song "Shake It Off."

Second, it discusses Camus's proposed response to humanity's "absurd existence."

Third, it focuses on *Theistic* Existentialism and how it compares with *Atheistic* Existentialism. Theistic Existentialism urges *surrender* rather than *revolt*. It rejects *reason* for *feelings*. It tends to stress taking a "blind leap" of faith. It does not see doctrine or history as important for faith. And, quite insightfully, it highlights the *personal* dimension in its views of sin, faith, and the Christian life.

12. Postmodernism, Part 1

Part 1 proposes that we should think of "postmodern" and "postmodernism" in two different senses: (1) A *CULTURAL* sense and (2) a *PHILOSOPHICAL* sense. With this distinction, most people can rightly see themselves living in a postmodern *culture*, but this does not mean that they should be (or consider themselves to be) *philosophical* postmodernists.

Both the cultural and philosophical senses are illustrated with TV shows, movies, music, and architecture.

13. Postmodernism, Part 2

Part 2 first reviews key points in Part 1 that involve the distinction between *cultural* and *philosophical* postmodernism. Philosophical POST-modernism should also be contrasted with “Modernism.”

Modernism stresses the following:	<i>Philosophical Postmodernism</i> stresses the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Absolute truth• Certainty• Objectivity• Science as superior• Universal rationality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An “incredulity toward metanarratives”• Skepticism• Subjectivity and relativism• Pragmatism (whatever works is true)• Multiple rationalities

Philosophical Postmodernism offers some stress on “relativism,” but other worldviews also include “relativistic” ideas (e.g., Secular Humanism, Nihilism, Existentialism). The relationship to *pluralism* and *tolerance* is also discussed.

The presentation includes a segment on the *origin* of Postmodernism and its proposed dates. It also explains some differences between Postmodernism and Nihilism. It concludes with a proposed Christian critique of both Modernism and Postmodernism.

14. Eastern Pantheism Monism, Part 1

Eastern Pantheistic Monism is a worldview that arose in the far East. It emphasizes that everything is ONE (monism), and it stresses the notion that “everything is God” (pantheism). It appears in various ways within different world religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and New Age philosophy.

Part One focuses on the history and basic ideas of Hinduism. It offers an explanation of a key idea in Hinduism—that “Atman is Brahman.” *Atman* is one’s *true self*, which is different from what, or who, we normally consider as our self-identity. *Brahman* is the all-encompassing oneness of all.

15. Eastern Pantheism Monism, Part 2

Part Two briefly summarizes and then analyzes a key idea in Hinduism: Atman is Brahman. Hinduism offers a very different view on “who you are.” Your true self is not your body or your mental states or memories. Your true self is your *atman* that is already ONE with Brahman. Our primary “sin” is ignorance about who we truly are.

The goal of “salvation” is to dispel the illusion of our false self and experience the union with Brahman. Hinduism, and other pantheistic perspectives, propose different means to salvation, including various types of yoga, uttering sacred mantras, transcendental meditation, and the use of

koans (short questions or statements designed to elicit enlightenment). Most versions of pantheism adopt the ideas of reincarnation and karma.

Part Two also discusses the history and ideas of Buddhism and how it compares with Hinduism. A contrast between Buddhism and Christianity is also given on the role of suffering.

16. The New Age Worldview

This is an overview of the beliefs and practices of the New Age worldview. It begins with a comparison between the New Age and Eastern Pantheistic Monism (like Hinduism), which was covered in a different lecture. It discusses the New Age approach to (1) reality, (2) humanity, and (3) its practices and techniques.

It uses a variety of examples and quotations from key New Age advocates. References are given to Marilyn Ferguson, Shirley MacLaine, Rhonda Byrne (*The Secret*), and J. Z. Knight. New Age practices include channeling, crystals, auras, and astrology.

The presentation concludes with a challenge and warning to Christians, especially because a notable survey showed that 6 in 10 professing Christians hold at least one New Age belief.

17. Responding to Secular Humanism

This lecture begins with a brief review of Secular Humanism and then offers four basic strategies for responding to this worldview. These strategies are based on a "neutralizing" approach, which attempts to destroy a worldview *from within* (2 Cor. 10:5) by critically examining the assumptions and claims of the worldview itself.

1. Become a good "hat detector" by discerning whether a claim is "scientific" or "philosophical."
2. Expose the *logical implications* of Naturalism.
3. Contrast the logical implications of the worldview to the *claims* and *behavior* of its advocates.
4. Compassionately pose probing questions.

The presentation uses a variety of examples and includes references to Richard Dawkins, Stephen Hawking, Peter Singer, Will Provine, Alex Rosenberg, and Antony Flew.

18. Responding to Relativistic Worldviews

This lecture offers a Christian response to relativism, which is present in several worldviews, including Secular Humanism, Nihilism, Existentialism, and Postmodernism. Relativism is the basic idea that truth *always depends* on one's personal or cultural perspective. The presentation explains the difference between "objective" truth and "subjective" truth (that includes cultural customs and personal preferences).

Five responses to relativism are provided:

1. Acknowledge the fact, and value of *cultural* diversity.
2. Acknowledge our biases and limitations on knowledge.
3. Expose the incoherence of *cognitive* relativism.
4. Disclose the unlivability of moral relativism.

19. Responding to New Age Pantheism

This lecture offers a Christian response to "New Age Pantheism," a general view that emphasizes that (1) everything is One, (2) Reason/Logic and the physical senses are deceptive, and (3) the self possesses deity (or godhood).

First, it conveys some legitimate insights of New Age Pantheism. Then, it provides five responses:

1. Recognize diversity among individuals.
2. Be aware of apparent (but false) parallels in theology and vocabulary.
3. Expose the inconsistencies.
4. Identify practical and existential problems.
5. Note the superior benefits of Christian Theism.

20. The Infinite God of Christian Theism

This lecture focuses on the concept and the characteristics of God according to historic Christian Theism. It covers classical ideas of God, but it also raises a variety of questions that prompt deeper thought. It includes descriptions of an infinite God who is:

1. Immaterial
2. Immense
3. Immortal
4. Immaculate
5. Omnipotent
6. Omniscient
7. Omnipresent

21. Christianity and the Worldview of Islam, Part 1

Part One on Islam discusses the historical and geographical background of Islam. It includes a list of major terms, an interesting biblical connection, the origin of Islam under Muhammad (and its rapid growth), and a list of significant modern events pertaining to Islam.

(Part Two surveys the "Five Pillars of Islam" and how it compares and contrasts to Christian belief and practice.)

22. Christianity and the Worldview of Islam, Part 2

Part Two surveys the "Five Pillars of Islam" and then presents some similarities and contrasts with Christianity. The contrasts concern the respective beliefs on the identity and nature of God, the identity of Jesus, the crucifixion of Jesus, the Christian Bible, and salvation.

The presentation includes a number of quotations from the Koran (Qu'ran) and clarifications of the notion of "jihad."

23. A Christian Approach to Science

This lecture offers a comprehensive introduction to science from a Christian perspective. First, it presents three different approaches to the relationship between science and Christianity: the conflict model, the compartmentalized model, and the coordination model. It contends that the first two models are false or unacceptable.

Second, the presentation discusses five major principles for approaching science:

1. Distinguish between science and scientism.
2. Understand scientists are not always rational or objective (neutral).
3. Historically, the modern sciences were pioneered by believers in creation.
4. Philosophically, science must rely on presuppositions that are provided by a creation, all of you, but not by science itself.
5. Theologically, biblical creationism provides the motivation to do science.

The presentation makes reference to Richard Dawkins, Kim Ham, Bill Nye, John Lennox, Isaac Newton, Robert Boyle, Michael Faraday, and Alford North Whitehead. It concludes with the following summary points:

1. There is no inherent (or necessary) conflict between science and Christianity.
2. Science and Christianity exhibit a positive relationship, historically, philosophically, and theologically.
3. Creationism offers the presuppositions necessary for science and the motivation to do science.

24. A Christian View of Ethics, Part 1

Ethics concerns questions about how we can determine what's right and wrong. Part One includes various cultural survey results on (a) whether right/wrong change; (b) whether moral truth is absolute or relative; and (c) whether lying is morally wrong.

Second, it poses a class survey that discloses whether the students view different examples as (a) absolutely wrong, (b) generally wrong, (c) morally inexpedient, or (d) morally acceptable. This is designed to challenge simplistic views of morality and help generate a better understanding of moral *absolutes*.

The last segment begins to examine four required components to ethics according to Scripture: (a) the action, (b) the agent, (c) the situation, and (d) the consequences. Ethics, biblically speaking, involves much more than just stipulating right and wrong *actions*. Part One focuses on a biblical morality of *actions*.

25. A Christian View of Ethics, Part 2

Part Two continues the presentation and analysis of four required components of a biblical ethic: (a) the actions, (b) the agent, (c) the circumstances, (d) and the situation.

The presentation utilizes the idea of "moral worth"--a concept that asks how God views what's "right" and "wrong." According to Scripture, God considers the *actions* but He also considered the *agent's motive and conscience*. And, while a Christian morality is not determined by the results of our actions (like utilitarianism), Scripture does give an important place to *consequences*--for example, whether our actions (a) edify others, (b) violate the conscience of others, and (c) produce a "stumbling block" to others.

The last component to a biblical ethic is the *situation*. While Christians should not accept "situation ethics," the Bible gives a critical role to how the *situation* can affect our "moral worth" to God. Here, the lecture discusses the nature of *absolutes* and how it's possible for multiple absolutes, very rarely, to conflict with one another. A key question, then, is this: what guidance, if any, does the Bible provide if absolutes somehow unavoidably conflict?

The lecture concludes with an overview of three different responses to this question by Christians: (a) unqualified absolutism, (b) qualified absolutism, and (c) graded absolutism. It points to the value of graded absolutism.

26. Living a Christian Worldview, Part 1

Dr. Richard Knopp begins a three-part conclusion to the course, emphasizing what it means, not just to *have*, but to *live* a Christian worldview. Part One summarizes key material presented earlier in the course. It then covers some cultural statistics and reveals how students scored on a "worldview test" over a period of years. The results reveal a notable drop among students who have a "biblical worldview."

The presentation introduces the alarming growth of the group of "Nones"--those who do not affiliate with any religious group. It exposes the role of *doubt*, giving an illustration about Dan Brown, the author of *The DaVinci Code*. It concludes with the troubling point that the percentage of GenX (the youngest generation) who identify as "atheist" is nearly double that of previous generations.

27. Living a Christian Worldview, Part 2

The entire course has raised many challenging questions. Part Two begins with the importance of encouraging questions and even doubts, and it presents the available resources from Room For Doubt (www.roomfordoubt.com).

Next, Part Two reviews the practical idea of using *worldview as a "tool."* It emphasizes the role of the mind, our attitudes, our actions, our speech, and our will. It reflects on several biblical passages, including Romans 12:1-2; Colossians 2:8; and 2 Corinthians 10:5. It discusses a "primary obstacle" to living a Christian worldview, which is adopting the dichotomy between the "sacred" and the "secular." And, it emphasizes that the "primary objective" is not just to *have*, but to *LIVE*, a Christian worldview. It also includes a summary list of five characteristics of a "Christian worldview."

The lecture concludes with an overview of three different but valuable approaches to worldview by Christian thinkers: (a) comparative philosophies (e.g., James Sire), (b) theological categories (e.g., Charles Colson, Nancy Pearcey), and (c) socio-academic implications (e.g., David Nobel and Summit Ministries, Del Tackett and "The Truth Project").

28. Living a Christian Worldview, Part 3

In the last lecture in the course, Part Three pursues the following:

1. It explains three different but valuable approaches to "worldview" by Christian thinkers. These consist of (a) comparative philosophies (e.g., James Sire), (b) theological categories (e.g., Charles Colson, Nancy Pearcey), and (c) socio-academic implications (e.g., David Nobel and Summit Ministries, Del Tackett and "The Truth Project").
2. It develops a graphic overview of what *living* a Christian worldview involves, based on the idea that living a Christian worldview is expressed in the "greatest commandment" in Scripture--to love God with all of one's heart, mind, soul, and strength.
3. It describes some examples of those who lived a Christian worldview, including C. S. Lewis, Billy Graham, Francis Schaeffer, Nancy Pearcey, Phil Vischer, and William Borden.
4. It concludes with a motivational challenge for all Christians to *LIVE* a Christian worldview.