

INTO MATURITY

GOD'S ANSWERS: Session Two

What does this mean? The role of God's truths and our culture's worldviews in shaping our thoughts.

Opening Prayer

Almighty God, Your Word is truth. Keep us steadfast in Your Word even as the evil one seeks to whispers his lies into our ears. Keep us with Your Son who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Amen.

Introduction

Read Aloud:

Confessions have consequences. We know that this is true when we see Christians around the world suffering persecution because of their confession. In those places, it is easy to see the consequence of a Christian's confession. However, while we don't always see such consequences in our lives, our confession does have consequences for us as well. It shapes who we are, what we believe, and how we see and understand things, what is often called a worldview.

Q: What is a worldview?

A: John Stonestreet in his book "Making Sense of Your World" says, "A worldview has been compared to a pair of glasses through which we see the world. Without these glasses, the world would appear as an unfocused, meaningless blob of people, places and ideas. Our worldview puts the world in focus and shapes how we make sense out of what we see; and like glasses, it will either help us or prevent us from seeing the world as it really is."

Basic Considerations

Examples of Worldview

Q: When looking at the picture on the right, what does the typical American see?

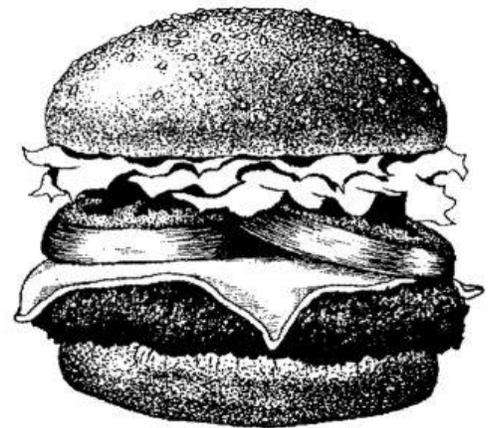
A: *Most Americans see a meal when they look at this picture. They may see it as a classic example of American cuisine.*

Q: What does the cattle farmer see?

A: *The cattle farmer may essentially see their livelihood, their "cash cow." While they might also see a meal, they will also associate this picture with the work they do to provide for their family.*

Q: What does a member of PETA (a group that opposes any consumption of meat) see?

A: *They are likely to see the end result of the torture and murder of an animal which should be afforded rights equal to humanity. They are likely to be outraged.*



Another Example



Q: When viewing the picture on the left, what does the American who most values being tolerant and loving see?

A: They might see this sign as a symbol of progress in society which looks out for groups that have long been oppressed. They might see it as a hopeful sign of change for our society.

Q: What does the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (or similarly socially conservative church body) member see?

A: They might see this sign as a symbol of moral decay. They might see it as the result of an effort to reorder the world that God created with an order.

Q: What might the militant Muslim see?

A: They might also see this sign as a symbol of moral decay. They might see it as the result of an effort to reorder the world that God created with an order.

Q: What do these examples show us about the power of worldview?

A: They show us that one's assumptions often color what they perceive. Sometimes difference in worldview place people who might have through they were similar at odds and other times they might place people who thought they were at odds in agreement on one issue or another. Overall, it reminds us that the basic things we believe about the world drastically affect how we see specific things in our world.

Q: Why does worldview matter? Does it affect more than how we think?

A: A worldview not only affects how we think, but is also affect our decisions and actions. Our worldview cannot remain internal, as our thoughts will impact everything we do.

Examples of Worldview Revisited

Q: What does the typical American do when they see this?

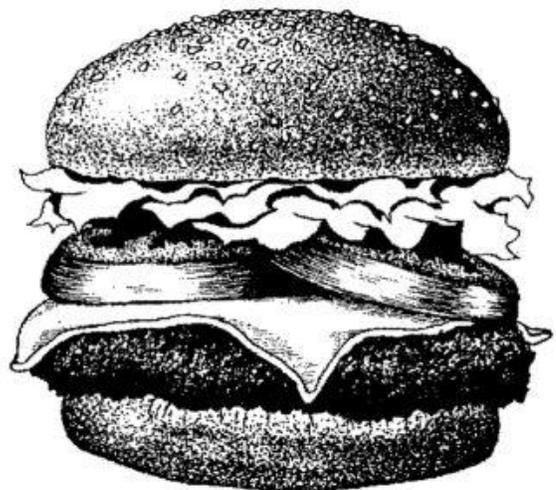
A: They may get hungry. They may salivate. They may eat.

Q: What does the cattle farmer do when they see this?

A: They may promote the eating of beef. They make check the prices on beef. They may check on their cattle.

Q: What does a member of PETA do when they see this?

A: They may protest the place that sells this product. They may seek to make an argument against eating meat. They may look down on others eating it.



Another Example



Q: What does the American who most values being tolerant and loving do when they see this?

A: They may tell a manager of their approval. They may smile. They may request other facilities follow suit.

Q: What does the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (or similarly socially conservative church body) member do?

A: They might mourn the state of society that takes such actions. They might complain to the manager. They might post a picture on social media to encourage people to boycott the location. They might look with suspicion at anyone using this restroom.

Q: What does the militant Muslim do when they see this?

A: Some might see this as worthy of a violence response. They also might voice their disapproval. They might look with suspicion at anyone using this restroom.

Read Aloud:

Everyone has a worldview. You have a worldview. I have a worldview. Everyone has a worldview, but not everyone has the right worldview. The Christian's worldview must be shaped by God.

Q: How does God shape our worldview?

A: God's Word has the power to shape us. Read the following verses aloud to emphasize this point:

- *2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness."*
- *Romans 12:1-2: "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."*
- *Colossians 2:8: "See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ."*

Q: Who else is working to shape your worldview?

A: The evil one, the Devil, is relentless in attempting to shape our worldview. Read the following verses aloud to emphasize this point:

- *Ephesians 6:16: "In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one."*
- *1 John 5:19: "We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one."*
- *Matthew 13:18-19: "Hear then the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path."*

Read Aloud:

Let's see how this works in relation to a specific topic. What does God teach us about the state of humanity after the fall into sin?

God's revealed truth – Augsburg Confession Article Two

Read aloud:

“Our churches teach that since the fall of Adam (Romans 5:12), all who are naturally born are born with sin (Psalm 51:5), that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with the inclination to sin, concupiscence. Concupiscence is a disease and original vice that is truly sin. It damns and brings eternal death on those who are not born anew through Baptism and the Holy Spirit (John 3:5).”

Q: How is this truth undercut in our world?

A: Use one or more of the following examples in media on the last page marked “Cultural Attempts to undermine this truth” to show how the devil uses the things of this world to fight against this truth of God.

Q: Why does it matter if we believe that the Scriptures teach that humanity apart from Christ is full of evil?

A: If we do not understand the nature of man, we will both overestimate what man can accomplish and underestimate our need for a Savior. We will seek to bring glory upon ourselves rather than Christ. We will not understand our need to repent. Read the following verses aloud to emphasize this point:

- *Matthew 23:12: “Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”*
- *1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*
- *Luke 5:31-32: “And Jesus answered them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.’”*

Read Aloud:

God reveals and so we confess. He talks and we echo His truth from our lips and in our lives. Our confession has consequences. These consequences are that we come to know the Truth, that we reject what is false, and that our interaction with the world around us is shaped by what we believe and who we are according to God's Truth.

Closing Prayer

Almighty God, Your Word reveals that humanity is set against you and your ways apart from your Son, Jesus. Guard us from the temptation to doubt this truth that we might always rest in the salvation He has won for us. Amen.

Cultural Attempts to undermine this truth:

Example 1:

Play “Born this Way” by Lady Gaga which can be found at https://youtu.be/IGj4_CFGH4c directing attention to the lyrics that suggest that all of us are born good and therefore whatever comes most naturally to us must also be good.

Then read at least one of the following verses that tell us what God teaches:

- “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 51:5)
- “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8)
- “For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out” (Romans 7:18)

Example 2:

Play “Follow Your Arrow” by Kacey Musgraves which can be found at <https://youtu.be/YUVDZk6nOOc> noting how it suggests that everyone should make decisions based on what seems right to them. Again, the underlying premise is that what each person feels is good is unquestionably good since people are good. This particular song mentions things such as homosexuality and drug use. Its appropriateness to even use as a bad example should be made based on the participants.

Then read at least one of the following verses that tell us what God teaches:

- “And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil” (John 3:19).
- “I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness” (John 12:46).
- “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!” (Matthew 6:22-23).

Example 3:

Play “Follow your heart” from Cinderella II which can be found at <https://youtu.be/LhFBuMn80x0> noting how it extols the virtue of following wherever the heart suggests. Again the assumption is that good naturally flows from the heart of humans.

Then read at least one of the following verses that tell us what God teaches:

- “But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander” (Matthew 15:18-19).
- “And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God” (Ezekiel 11:19-20).