

**Rethinking Worldview:
A New Paradigm for Christian Discipleship
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Room For Doubt is a grant-funded program that provides learning experiences and resources to strengthen the faith of committed Christians, address the questions of those who have doubts about their Christian heritage, and represent the Christian message to those who are skeptical about its claims.

Introduction

- A. The “worldview” concept
 - 1. Complexity, confusions, and criticisms (e.g. 2004 “After Worldview” conference).
 - 2. Personal connections: Classes, programs, books, and more.
- B. Basic claim: The worldview concept can be an extremely valuable and versatile tool that facilitates desperately needed discipleship diagnosis and development in an increasingly post-Christian culture.
- C. Primary points of presentation

I. Disconcerting Data about Discipleship

- A. “Biblical Worldview”
 - 1. “Born again” adults? _____%.
 - 2. “Biblical worldview”:² All Adults? _____%. All Teens? _____%.
 - 3. “Biblical worldview”: Those 18-23? _____%.
- B. The Rise of the NONES—the Religiously Detached (see the “2014 Religious Landscape Survey” by Pew Research.)
 - 1. Adults: **1990** 8.1%; **2007** 15.3%; **2012** 19.3%; **2014** _____%.
 - 2. The Nones: 36.6 million (2007) to 56 million (2014).
 - 3. 18-29 year olds: **2007** 22%; **2012** 32%.
 - a. **2014**: Older Millennials (25-33): _____%.
 - b. **2014**: Younger Millennials (18-24): _____%.
 - 4. From “religious homes”? _____%.
(See the 2009 American Religious Identification Survey.)
 - 5. Religious “de-converts”? _____%.
- C. “Churched Doubters and Dropouts”
 - 1. “Churched Teens”: No longer active in church in their 20s? _____%.
 - 2. Significantly doubted their faith? _____%.
 - 3. Felt like rejecting their parents’ faith? _____%.

¹ Check the session webpage for additional resources, including slides and outline with answers for blanks.

² For the Barna Research Group, the criteria for having a “biblical worldview” are as follows: Made a personal commitment to Christ with belief in salvation from Jesus; acceptance of absolute moral truth, biblical moral standards, Satan’s existence, and Jesus’ sinless life; and trust in Christ for salvation.

“... The most frequently mentioned role of Christians in de-conversion was in amplifying existing doubt.’ De-converts reported ‘sharing their burgeoning doubts with a Christian friend or family member only to receive trite, unhelpful answers’” (Drew Dyck, “The Leavers: Young Doubters Exit the Church,” *Christianity Today* [Nov. 19, 2010]).
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/november/27.40.html>. Accessed 5-12-14.

- D. Anecdotal data from an online “worldview test” at www.worldviewweekend.com.
1. This test has problematic assumptions, but it’s still enlightening.
 2. Worldviews identified: Strong Biblical; Moderate Biblical; Secular Humanist; Socialist; Communist/Marxist/Socialist.
 3. Eight sub-categories (civil government, economics, education, family, law, religion, science, social issues).

II. Discipleship Problems and Worldview Prospects

“After more than a decade and a half of research into American faith, I believe that the Christian church in the United States has a *shallow faith problem* because we have a *discipleship problem*. Moreover, diagnosing and treating shallow faith among young adults is urgent because we have a *shallow faith problem among all adults*.... The *dropout problem* is, at its core, a faith-development problem; to use religious language, it’s a *disciple-making problem*” (David Kinnaman, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church...and Rethinking Faith* [Kindle locations 1873, 216]; emphasis added).

| Discipleship Problems | Worldview Prospects |
|---|---|
| 1. Contentment with the “milk” of the word (Hebrews 5:12–14)—a “shallow” faith. | 1. _____ for maturity. |
| 2. Mind-Less Christian faith. | 2. A _____ mind. |
| 3. A GAP between professed beliefs and behavior. | 3. Needed _____. |
| 4. A GAP between “sacred” and “secular.” | 4. Relevance to _____ of life. |
| 5. Don’t know <i>WHY</i> we believe the Christian way and why we <i>don’t believe</i> something else. | 5. A strategy for comparisons and apologetic _____. |
| 6. Missing the “BIG picture.” | 6. A _____ for the big picture. |

III. Prominent Worldview Perspectives and Recent Shifts

A. Different “doorways” to worldview.

1. **ISM-comparisons** (e.g. James Sire, *The Universe Next Door*)
2. **Theological Categories: Creation, Fall, Redemption** (e.g. Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity*, 2004; *Saving Leonardo: A Call to Resist the Secular Assault on Mind, Morals, and Meaning*, 2010; Philip Ryken, *What Is the Christian Worldview?*, 2013; C. Fred Smith, *Developing a Biblical Worldview: Seeing Things God’s Way*, 2015).

“Where did we come from and who are we (**Creation**)? What has gone wrong with the world (**Fall**)? And what can we do to fix it (**Redemption**)? These three questions form a grid that we can use to break down the inner logic of every belief system or philosophy that we encounter. . . .” (Colson, Pearcey, and Fickett, *How Now Shall We Live?* 144; emphasis added).

3. **Socio-Academic** areas (e.g. Del Tackett and the Truth Project at www.thetruthproject.org; Colson’s Center for Christian Worldview at www.colsoncenter.org; Summit Ministries at www.summit.org).

B. Correct criticisms of worldview.

1. Too focused on the _____ and on mere _____.
2. Too _____.

C. Recent and helpful shifts in thinking about worldview.

1. Emphasis on **HEAD** (e.g. James Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, editions 1-3 [1976, 1988, 1997])

Worldview is “a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic makeup of our world” (emphasis added).

2. Emphasis on the biblical idea of the **HEART** (e.g. David Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept*, 2004; Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, editions 4-5 [2004, 2009])

“The heart of the matter of worldview is that worldview is a matter of the heart.... I propose that the heart and its content as the center of human consciousness creates and constitutes what we commonly refer to as a *Weltanschauung*” [worldview] (Naugle, pp. 269-270; emphasis added).

Sire, *Universe Next Door*, 4th ed. (2004) and 5th ed. (2009): [NEW elements in his definition]:
Worldview is “... a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions ...” (emphasis added). Also see Sire’s *Naming the Elephant*.

3. Emphasis on **ACTIONS** oriented by ultimate **DESIRE** (e.g. James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*, 2009).

Worldview should be seen, not so much as what people *think* but in what they *do* (p. 11); and what they do is shaped by the heart, which is “oriented primarily by desire, by what we love” (25).

“What’s at stake” is “not primarily ideas but love” (27).

IV. Discipleship Diagnosis and Development: A New Paradigm for the Worldview Tool

A. Your “**WORLDVIEW**” is the “**CORE**” of **WHO YOU ARE** “functioning components”).

1. Mind (basic beliefs and assumptions about universal human questions)
2. Attitude (emotion/conscience)
3. Behavior (actions/communication)
4. Will (motives/desires)

B. Definition of “**A WORLDVIEW**”: “A worldview is a way of life guided by basic beliefs and priority values that are expressed in prevailing behavior.”

C. Definition of a “**CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW**”: “A Christian worldview is a way of life with basic beliefs, priority values, and prevailing behavior that are consciously directed by a love for God and His Word for humanity.”

1. Connection to the “greatest commandment” (Mk 12:28–31; Mt 22:34-40; Lk 10:25–28) and to the *Shema* (Deut. 6:4–9).
2. Emphasis on love, not mere professed belief.

D. Using the worldview tool: Some practical applications

1. Identify the “**functioning components**” in Bible passages (e.g. Rom 12:1–2; Col 3:5–10; Eph 4:20–32).
 - a. Mind (basic beliefs and assumptions about universal human questions)
 - b. Attitude (emotion/conscience)
 - c. Behavior (actions/communication)
 - d. Will (motives/desires)
2. Evaluate your individual “**integrity**” based on biblical reflection (see the graphic below on “Discipleship Diagnosis: How’s Your Integrity?”).
3. Assess how **consciously** and **consistently** you are **LIVING** a Christian worldview in ALL of life (see the graphic below on “Living a Christian Worldview”).

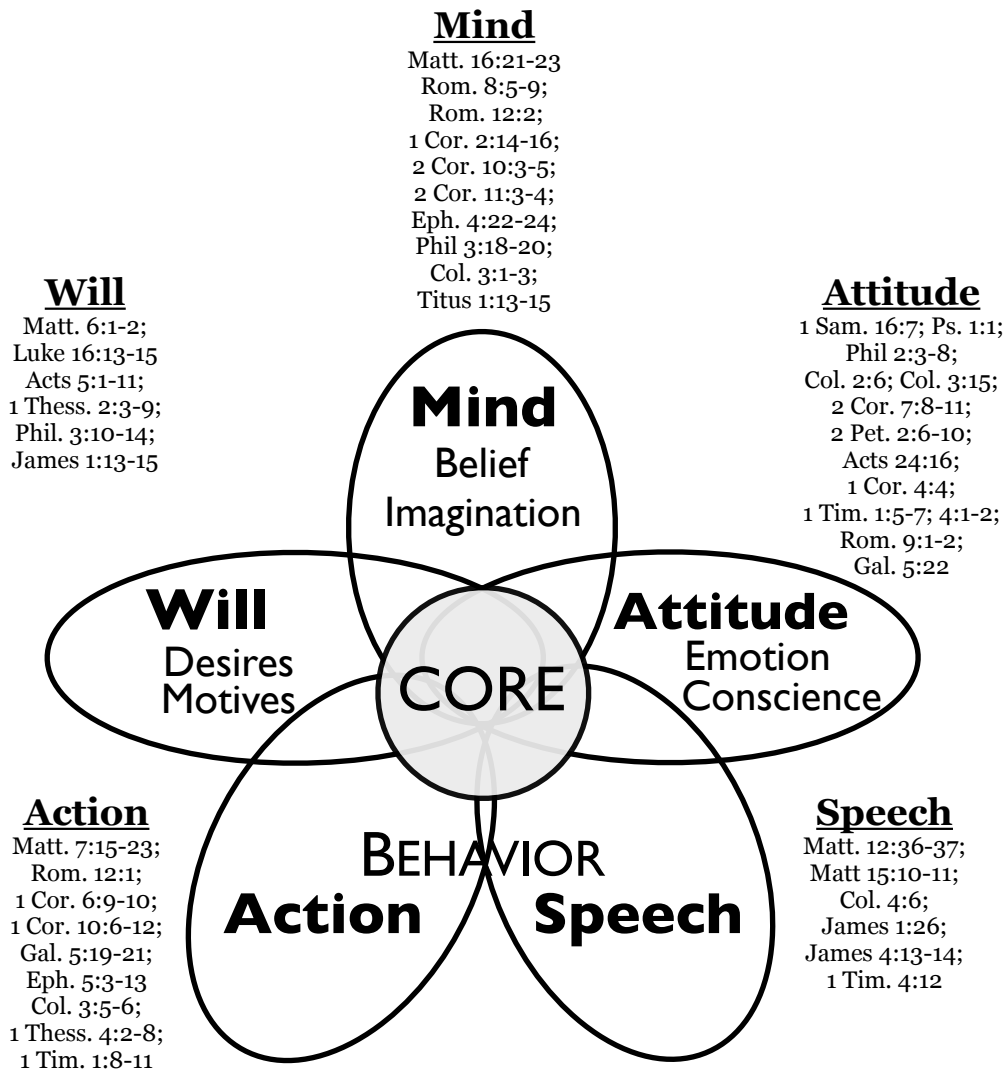
To what extent ...

- a. **Personal Integrity:**
 - Am I motivated by a love for God in my mind, attitudes, behavior, and will (Mk 12:30)?
 - Do I have a transformed mind (Rom 12:1–2)—the “mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:15)—that is led by the Spirit of God (Rom 8:5–14)?
 - Do I desire to be consistent (in mind, attitude, behavior, and will)? How/Where can I be more consistent?
 - Do I seek to know God’s revelation and its profitability for every good work (2 Tim 3:15–17)?
 - Do I consciously allow God’s revelation to inform my thoughts, attitudes, speech, actions, and deepest desires?
- b. **Individual Involvement:**
 - Do I “take every thought captive” to Christ (2 Cor 10:5) in my own involvement with culture (e.g. media, leisure, work, education, sports, money)?
 - Do I conduct myself “in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ” (Phil 1:27)?
 - Am I providing “salt” and “light” for my culture (Matt 5:13–14)?
 - Am I, like Lot, “distressed” and “tormented” by a sinful culture (2 Pet 2:4–9)?
- c. **Relational Investments:**
 - Do I understand the implications of a Christian worldview for all my relationships?
 - Do I apply a Christian worldview to my relationships (family, friends, church, community, work)?
- d. **Social-Academic Influence:**
 - Do I see the relevance of the Christian worldview for socio-academic areas (e.g. law, politics, economics, history, education, psychology, art, biology, cosmology, philosophy, sociology, anthropology)?
 - Are my social values adequately informed by God’s revelation?
 - Do I recognize and critically engage the assumptions that are incompatible with a Christian worldview?
 - Do I try to offer constructive Christian contributions to the socio-academic areas?
 - Do I understand the implications of a Christian worldview for *my college major or career*?
- e. **Cultural Impact:**
 - Do I engage in and support cross-cultural and global witness (Matt 28:18–20)?
 - Do I view the Gospel as equally important for all ethnic groups?
- f. **Apologetic Interactions:**
 - Am I personally convicted of the truth of the Christian faith?
 - How prepared am I to give a reasoned account of my Christian hope (1 Peter 3:15)?
 - Can I detect the presence and influence of other worldviews and avoid being taken captive by deceptive philosophies (Col 2:8; 2 Cor 10:5)?
 - Can I politely but persuasively dialogue with someone with a different worldview (1 Pet 3:15)

E. Someone who **LIVES a Christian worldview:**

1. _____ God with all of one’s heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mk 12:30).
2. Is adequately _____ by God’s revelation (2 Tim 3:16–17; Rom 1:18–20).
3. Has a _____ mind (Rom 12:1–2) that is led by the _____ (Rom 8:5–14).
4. Is not taken _____ by deceptive philosophies (Col 2:8) but takes every thought _____ to Christ (2 Cor 10:5).
5. Is always ready to give _____ for the Christian hope (1 Peter 3:15).
6. Applies the obligations and implications of the Christian worldview to _____ of life (3 John 1:4; Eph 4:1,14–15; Col 2:6; 1 Thess 4:1).

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30).



Discipleship Diagnosis: How’s Your Integrity?

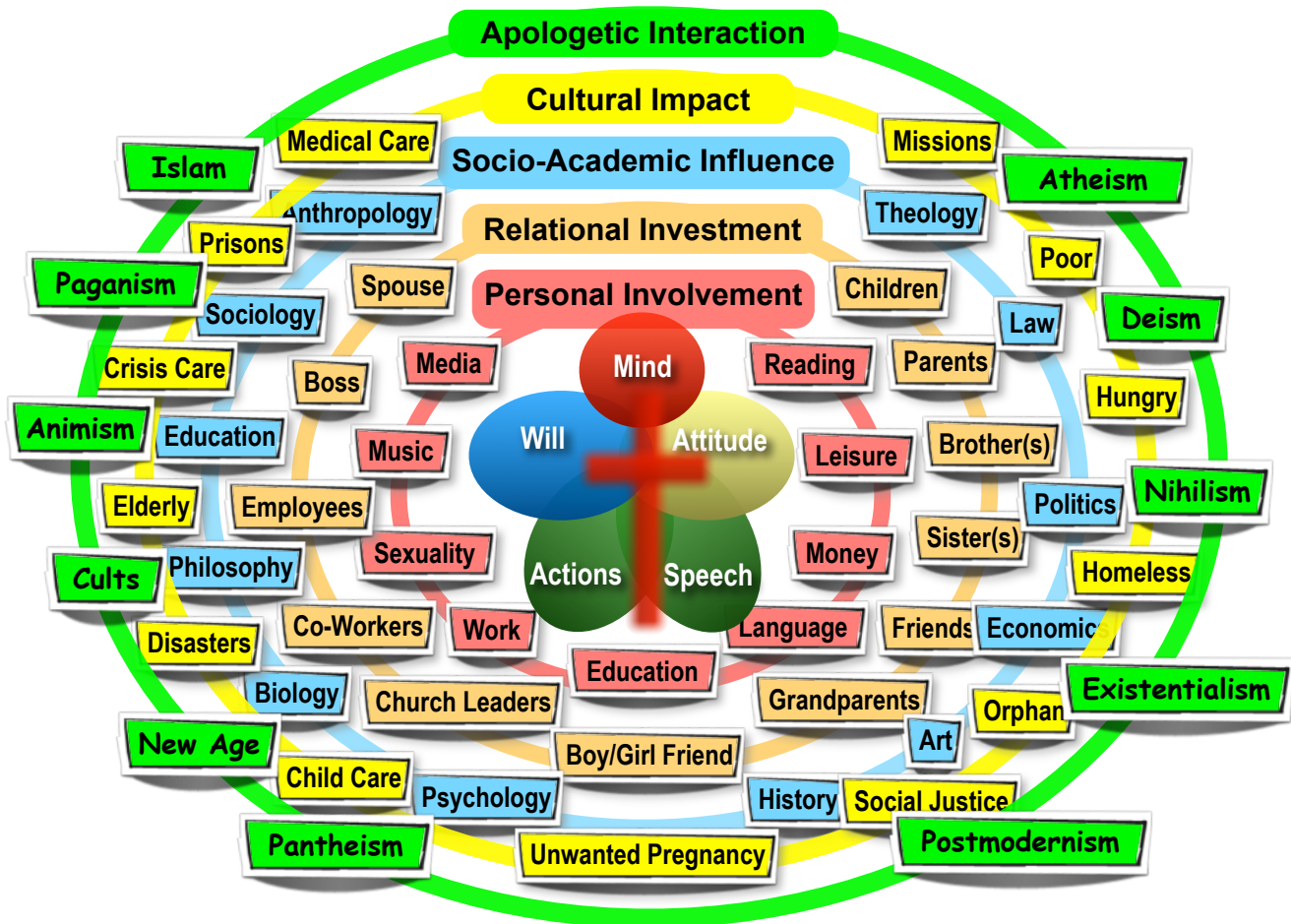
1. Read the scriptures and note what is especially significant or relevant for you in each area.
2. Do an honest spiritual appraisal in each of these areas.
3. In what ways are you *inconsistent* in these areas? How can you improve?

| | |
|--|---|
| ❖ Do I <i>say</i> but don’t <i>do</i> ? | ❖ What do I do that I <i>should</i> do but don’t really <i>want</i> to do? |
| ❖ What <i>beliefs</i> do I affirm but don’t <i>act out</i> ? | ❖ What do I not <i>want</i> to do but often do anyway? |
| ❖ Does my <i>speech</i> match my expressed beliefs? | ❖ Is my <i>conscience</i> genuinely hurt after doing what my faith says is wrong? |

4. To what extent are you *consciously* motivated by your *love for God* in each area?

LIVING a Christian Worldview

“... walk in a manner worthy of the calling” (Eph 4:1);
 “... how you ought to walk and please God” (1 Thess 4:1);
 “I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth” (3 John 1:4) [NASV]



How CONSCIOUSLY and EFFECTIVELY am I LIVING a Christian Worldview in ALL of life?

Use this for personal devotions or small group interaction: How would I grade myself in these areas? Where do I need the most growth? What steps should I take? What resources can I use?

1. Personal Integrity?
2. Individual Involvement with Culture?
3. Relational Investments?
4. Socio-Academic Influence?
5. Cultural Impact?
6. Apologetic Interaction? (E.g. Do I know WHY I accept and live a Christian worldview? Have I gone beyond mere mental assent to personal conviction? Do I know why I *don't* believe something else? How “ready” am I to give reason for my Christian hope? How often do I?)