

FRAMING YOUR WORLDVIEW



Taught by Rick Warren and Chuck Colson

Six Video Lessons for your Small Group

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDEBOOK

CONTENTS – Participant’s Study Guide

Understanding Your STUDY GUIDE

There are 3 SUMMARIES for each SESSION. Each summary follows one of the three video SEGMENTS you’ll watch for each of the six SESSIONs. Use the margins to write down your notes.

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SESSION 1:

My Worldview Matters

Study Notes:

[Remember there is a “*summary*” page for each of the three video segments]

Summary

A worldview is simply the way we think the world works, and how we fit into it. Everyone has a worldview, though most people are not aware of it. Understanding these worldviews is vitally important, because they shape our thoughts, attitudes, and actions.

- Everyone has a worldview.

- Your worldview is the way you think the world works, and how you fit into it.

- Worldviews answer four questions:
 - Where did I come from?

 - Why is the world such a mess?

 - Is there a solution?

 - What is my purpose?

Summary

Our worldviews will inevitably be shaped either by the media or by the Bible. Unfortunately, Christians have all too often neglected the command to love God with our minds, not just our hearts. This often is a result of having emphasized feeling over thinking. We need to learn to think biblically and to have the integrity to live out what the Bible teaches, since the Bible alone provides a true, livable worldview.

- We are to love God, not just with our hearts and souls, but also with our minds.
- The biblical worldview integrates all parts of life under God and allows us to live with integrity.
- Worldviews contradict each other and can't all be true; only the biblical worldview gives us a complete and true picture of the world as it really is.

Summary

Worldviews have consequences, and false worldviews can be disastrous. The Bible speaks to all of life, and its teachings compete with false worldviews for our allegiance. Since only the biblical worldview accurately describes reality, we need to implement it to avoid disaster. Moreover, to do that, we need to be good stewards of our minds, learning to think biblically and to apply biblical truth to all areas of life.

- Ideas have consequences: *“For as [a man] thinks in his heart, so is he.”* (Proverbs 23:7 NKJV)
- The two great themes of the Bible are salvation and stewardship, which includes stewardship of the mind.
- “There is not a square inch in the whole domain of human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry: ‘Mine!’”

Living on Purpose (10 Minu

Discipleship

Developing a biblical worldview means learning to see all of life through God's eyes. Using your current understanding of Scripture and worldview, take some time as a group to list the different areas of your life (work, family, recreation, etc.) and share some ideas together about how we should be thinking about these areas of life from a biblical perspective.

Work:

Family:

Recreation:

Others:

Prayer Direction (10 Minutes)

As you close the meeting:

- Thank God for giving us the Bible as a guidebook to tell us the way the world really works and how we should live in it.

- Ask God to help you see the world the way he sees it, to show you where you need to change, and to give you the wisdom and courage to do so.

Putting It into Practice

Rick and Chuck told us that Christianity is a worldview, one that should shape the way we think about the world, make decisions, and take action. At the same time, false worldviews are influencing the way we look at the world and the way we live. During this week, pay attention to the variety of messages you are getting about worldviews and the four worldview questions. Using your knowledge of the Bible, think of how you should respond. Come prepared to share your thoughts at our next meeting.

SESSION 2:

How Do We Know What's True?

Study Notes:

[Remember there is a “*summary*” page for each of the three video segments]

Summary

Our society has embraced an idea of "tolerance." Tolerance demands that we affirm that all views are equally valid. We have adopted a relativistic view that denies there is any fixed truth, and that whatever works for you is true for you. Ultimately, not everything can be true: if one thing is true, it excludes others as false. The Bible teaches that Jesus is the only Truth, and the biblical worldview is true and all others are false.

- American society has replaced the idea of absolute truth with relativism—the denial that there is such a thing as truth.
- Society pressures us to be “non-judgmental” and “tolerant” (that is, not to say anything that might offend someone).
- Biblical Christianity proclaims Jesus as the Truth, and thus we must believe in truth.

Summary

There are four ways to know truth. Three of the ways were discussed in this video segment. The fourth way is revealed in the next segment.

First, the truth is in our hearts: our consciences tell us, for example, that some things are right and others are wrong (Romans 2). Second, the Bible teaches truth. Third, the created world reveals truth, even about God (Romans 1).

- The first three ways of knowing truth are:
 - Revealed Truth in the Bible
 - Nature (Romans 1)
 - Conscience (Romans 2)
- When talking with non-Christians, don't start with the Bible.
- There is ample evidence that the Bible is true.

Summary

The fourth way to know truth is by comparing ideas with the way the world actually works. Truth is that which conforms to reality, and only the biblical worldview can pass this test. We can use these four questions as a tool for testing the validity of competing worldviews:

- 1. Where did I come from?*
- 2. Why is the world such a mess?*
- 3. Is there a solution?*
- 4. What is my purpose?*

When a worldview provides answers to questions incorrectly, bad consequences follow.

- The fourth way of knowing truth is to compare worldviews to reality and see how well they work.
- Only the biblical worldview answers the questions correctly; every other worldview breaks down.
- Comparing worldviews is a great starting point for talking to non-Christians.

Living on Purpose (10 Minutes)

Evangelism

We live in a society that questions whether absolute truth exists, or if it does, whether it is knowable. However, in our key verse, John 8:32, Jesus promises us that we will know the truth and that this will set us free.

- What are some of the ways that people around you are enslaved by not knowing the truth?

- In what ways can you share the truth to bring the freedom of Christ to people in these situations? Will you do it? Come prepared to share any experiences you have had at the next meeting.

Prayer Direction (10 Minutes)

As you close the meeting:

- Thank God that he has made it possible for us to know the truth about the world around us, our neighbors, and ourselves. Thank him especially for the opportunity to know the truth in Jesus, who is himself, the truth.
- Ask God to help you grow in your knowledge of the truth, and ask for the wisdom and courage to share the truth with others.

Putting It into Practice

Pay attention this week to the truth claims you encounter in your daily life, from supermarket tabloids touting a “scientific discovery” (claiming that if scientists say it, it must be true), to people saying “that’s true for you” (claiming truth is relative and personal).

- What attitudes toward truth are demonstrated in these truth claims?
- How would you apply the four worldview questions to test the validity of these truth claims? Come prepared to share these next week.

SESSION 3:

Where Did We Come From?

Study Notes:

[Remember there is a “*summary*” page for each of the three video segments]

Summary

God loves us and he made us for a purpose. Although we cannot contemplate life without a purpose, naturalism cannot supply us with one. According to the naturalism worldview, we are a result of random mutations and are effectively "complex slime." Despite this, naturalism, buoyed by Darwinism, is the dominant worldview in secular society today. Darwinism arose in an era that was moving away from biblical truth and replacing Christianity with enlightenment thought.

- God made us in his image, which gives each of us innate dignity and provides the essential foundation for ethics.
- The naturalist, who believes in Darwinian evolution, denies our creation and thus has no basis for human worth.
- Naturalists (evolutionists) know that they do have innate value even if they can't find a reason for it in their worldview.

Summary

Darwinism is so popular because it cuts out the foundations for morality and allows us to live how we want to live. It leads to Social Darwinism, Eugenics, and other movements that deny the value of human life. But Darwinism has significant credibility weaknesses:

- *Lack of intermediate fossils*
- *Cambrian Explosion*
- *No one has successfully created a new species*
- *Presence of both altruism and homosexuality*

Each of these illustrates the weaknesses of Darwinism.

Intelligent Design is a scientific alternative based on the idea that living organisms are irreducibly complex and thus could not have evolved gradually over time. Intelligent Design's conclusions fall in line with the biblical worldview.

- There is a substantial and growing body of scientific evidence against Darwinism and for Intelligent Design.
- Darwinism is not just science, but a worldview.
- We should answer science with science, not with theory and not with Scripture, but we must also challenge the Darwinian worldview.

Summary

Evolution leaves humanity without purpose. Camus states, "In the face of the meaninglessness of the universe, the only serious philosophical question is suicide." Further, it requires far more faith to be an atheist, since the evidence for a creator is overwhelming. In contrast, biblical worldview tells us that we need to find our purpose and fulfill it, giving our lives value and meaning. The biblical worldview also protects and promotes life in a way naturalism does not.

- The logical result of naturalism is nihilism—the idea that life is purposeless and nothing matters.
- The image of God gives all human life sanctity, value, meaning, and purpose.
- The biblical view of humanity and human worth is under attack today on all fronts, and we must be prepared to defend it.

Prayer Direction (10 Minutes)

- In light of the Psalms you just read, spend time in worship, praising and thanking God for creation in general and his creation of humanity (and you!) in particular. Thank him for your senses and the ability to enjoy and appreciate the world, and for your mind that helps you understand it. Thank him for the meaning and purpose that our lives have because we were created in his image.

Putting It into Practice

- Watch the media for reports on origins. What worldview do you see underlying the reporting?

- If possible, ask teachers in your area what they are teaching about origins, both of the physical universe and of humans. Then, ask students what they know about our origins. Are the answers the same? If they are different, why do you think that is the case?

- Ask people you know what they think of Intelligent Design. If they think of it as religion or Creationism, share with them why Intelligent Design is actually a scientific theory.

SESSION 4:

It's a Messed Up World

Study Notes:

[Remember there is a “*summary*” page for each of the three video segments]

Summary

The biblical worldview teaches that sin entered the world because of our free will. God made us in his image, to love him and to have a relationship with him. However, love must be freely given if it is to be real, and so God gave us the ability to reject him. Man chose the non-good rather than the good, and as a result our lives have been broken on all levels. Every sin calls into doubt God's knowledge of what is best; but, because God does know what is best, sin also hurts us and the world we live in.

- God gave us free will so we could love him. Love that isn't freely given isn't love.
- We often use our free will to reject the good which God offers us.
- All sin is based on lies, questioning whether God really loves us or knows what's best for us.

Summary

No other worldview of sin fits reality. Only the power of Christ can change us and put us on the road to living a good life. Therefore, those without Christ cannot consistently do good. We are called to recognize and identify sin without being judgmental. We need to take responsibility for our own failings and accept people without approving of their wrong choices.

- No other worldview has an adequate explanation for the evil in the world.
- Without God, people can do good things but they cannot be good.
- Recognizing sin isn't being judgmental: we can accept people without approving what they do.
- God redeems sin and suffering.

Living on Purpose (10 Minutes)

Worship and Evangelism

When we look at the world around us, it is easy to see sin promoted in our society and the broken lives it has caused. Yet as the verses quoted at the beginning of this session remind us, sin is not limited to those “out there,” but it affects each one of us. It may seem strange to discuss worship in the context of sin, yet confession has been part of worship since the Old Testament.

- Read Nehemiah 1:5-11 and Daniel 9:4-19. Neither Nehemiah nor Daniel was part of the generation that sinned, yet they still confessed personally the sins of their people. What can we learn from them in our prayers for our church, community, and country?
- 1 John 1:9 reminds us that personal confession of sin to God leads to forgiveness. Is this something you practice? How often?
- Ask God to help you have his heart for the lost around you, recognizing and mourning for sin and its effects, and building in you a zeal to share the Gospel with people who need to experience God's grace and healing.

Prayer Direction (10 Minutes)

- Spend some time in prayers of confession of personal and corporate sins. Thank God for the promise of forgiveness.
- Pray for people who you know are suffering. Ask God to use you to bring them hope and relief.

Putting It into Practice

One thing we hope to learn by studying differing worldviews is how they can shape people's actions and attitudes. As you go through the week, you will undoubtedly run into examples of sin and its effects in the world around you. Take some time to think about the stated or implied worldview behind the choices that produce the sin:

- What does the worldview say about the value of people?

- How does the worldview fit with reality? Come prepared to share your insights with the group at our next meeting.

SESSION 5:

What's the Solution?

Study Notes:

[Remember there is a “*summary*” page for each of the three video segments]

Summary

The world is looking for salvation in all the wrong places. Some look for it in political power and the law. Others believe education will solve all human problems. For others, the solution is found in economics and material prosperity. Still others believe that psychology will provide liberation. But none of these supposed solutions address the underlying condition of human sinfulness.

- Politics cannot solve the problems the world is facing.
- Education has not changed things much either.
- Money cannot bring ultimate satisfaction, purpose, or meaning.
- Psychology does not provide the answer.

Summary

Redemption brings reconciliation with God and with our neighbor. Reconciliation enables us to build Christian community—the church of Jesus Christ. As his church, God calls us to be agents of reconciliation to the world, sharing the gospel through our words and our actions. Over time, the gospel transforms us as we live out our faith.

- Redemption leads to reconciliation not just with God, but in all our relationships.

- Christians obey God out of gratitude for what he's done for us, not out of obligation.

- All our problems didn't go away when we became a Christian, but through grace, we can accept God's will.

Living on Purpose (10 Minutes)

Fellowship

Because we have been reconciled to God through Christ, God is now our Father, we are his children, other believers are our brothers and sisters, and the church is our spiritual family.

- How should this truth shape our attitude toward fellowship?

- Have you ever been in a situation where you developed friendships with people solely because you shared a relationship with Jesus? Briefly describe the situation.

Prayer Direction (10 Minutes)

- Thank God for the gift of salvation.
- Thank God that in Christ we have the answers for all our needs, our relationships with others, and even answers to the broader issue of our relationship to the world around us.
- Ask God for wisdom and courage to act as agents of reconciliation wherever you are. Pray specifically for those people in need of the gospel whom God has placed in your life.

Putting It into Practice

Over the past few weeks, we have been looking at how worldviews shape the actions and attitudes of people. This week, initiate at least one conversation about worldview with someone who is not involved in this study. Seek to understand the implications of their position.

Hints:

1. Listen intently. Think about the worldview implications.
2. Ask them questions about their comments.
3. Listen carefully to their answers. If needed, ask for clarification.
4. Don't become defensive. Share your thoughts with gentleness and respect. See 1 Peter 3:15.
5. Come prepared to talk about your experience at the next session.

SESSION 6:

What Do I Do Now?

Study Notes:

[Remember there is a “*summary*” page for each of the three video segments]

Summary

The biblical worldview says that God's sovereignty influences every area of life. It provides the foundations for economic development and justice. Our concepts of freedom, the rule of law, and limited government come from the Bible. Most early leaders of modern science were Christians; and only the biblical worldview provides a solid foundation for science. The arts too are founded in Scripture and are a reflection of God's beauty and his will for creation.

- Business and economics, law and government, and science have all developed through Christianity's influence on culture.
- The biblical worldview holds that art should reflect objective standards of beauty rooted in God.
- Christianity has important things to say about how we work in each area of life.

Summary

As we seek to apply the biblical worldview to all of life, we must not try to impose it on others; instead, we should propose a better way of life to them. We must approach our task with humility, humor and grace, always seeking to persuade, not coerce. We should honor those who oppose us, recognizing in them the image of God, as we live out the love of God in all our relationships. We change lives first, then culture, as we work to overcome evil with good.

- We do not want to impose our views on others; instead, we want to propose something better.
- Keep learning about worldviews.
- Lovingly challenge people about their worldviews, and introduce them to something better.
- Overcome evil with good.

Living on Purpose (10 Minutes)

Ministry and Mission

The fourth worldview question, “What is my purpose?” is all about what we do with the answers to the first three questions. To the Christian, this means our calling to love God and love our neighbor “not in word or talk but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:18, ESV). We live out this calling through our ministry in the church and through our mission in the world: a mission that includes not simply evangelism to fulfill the Great Commission, but stewardship to fulfill the Cultural Commission.

1. What is your calling? How can you fulfill the Cultural Commission in each of the following areas:

- Family

- Business

- Community

- Personal Growth

- Recreation

2. In what ways are you using the gifts God has given you in service to his church? Is there any ministry that you feel called to that you are not currently pursuing? What can you do to begin?

Prayer Direction (10 Minutes)

- Thank God for what you have learned in this study.

- Ask God for grace and courage to share the biblical worldview with others.

Putting It into Practice

God has called you to advance his kingdom in all areas of life, acting as his steward and ambassador to the world around you. The first step to fulfilling this call is to renew your commitment to reading the Bible and developing a deeper understanding of the biblical worldview.

Next, develop the habit of analyzing movies, television shows, newspapers, and even the comments of people around you, to understand their worldviews. Then, “with gentleness and respect,” propose a better way; showing people through your words and your life how things are meant to be.