

Lesson 1

Name _____
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CHRISTIANITY IS A WORLDVIEW

Before You Begin

As you read *How Now Shall We Live?*, you will notice that Colson uses the term “common grace” to refer to “God’s power sustain[ing] creation, holding back the sin and evil that result from the Fall and that would otherwise overwhelm his creation like a great flood.” Many Christians prefer not to call this concept “common grace,” because, after all, is grace ever *common*? Biblically, the term “grace” exclusively refers to the redemptive action of God. Grace is a particular, miraculous, soul-altering blessing of God poured down on His children, the true recipients of His favor and love.

The concept of sin being restrained by the power of God is perhaps better understood as a dimension of God’s “providence.” However, for the sake of continuity, we will use the term “common grace” as Colson does throughout this course.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

1. “Turning our backs on the _____ is a betrayal of our biblical _____ and our own heritage because it denies God’s _____ over all of _____.”
2. “Only _____ offers a comprehensive _____ that covers all areas of life and thought, every aspect of creation.”
3. A worldview is, “the sum total of our _____ about the _____, the ‘big picture’ that directs our daily _____ and _____.”
4. “In the first chapter of John, Christ is called the _____. In the Greek, _____ literally means the _____, the word...”
5. “Renewal can occur when _____ are committed to living out their _____, seeing the world as _____ sees it, viewing reality through the lens of _____.”
6. “...truth is found only in relationship to _____ and his _____.”
7. “No transgression of _____ is without painful _____.”

SHORT ANSWER

1. According to chapter 2, what three questions define the term “worldview”?

1.

2.

3.

Use the space below to explain how you would answer each of the above three questions.

1.

2.

3.

2. Answer the following with a brief sentence:

A. What is the basis or foundation for a Christian worldview?

B. According to Cornelius Plantinga, what does it mean to be wise?

3. List three areas of your life where you feel that you have not yet allowed your faith in Christ and a biblical worldview to have an impact on the position in which God has placed you. Explain your answers.

1.

2.

3.

2. Colson points out in these chapters that a Christian should engage culture rather than retreat from it. He says that Christianity is more than personal Bible study and prayer. Instead, he says that Christians should be at work having a “redemptive effect on the surrounding culture.”

List some specific examples of how a Christian can be active in engaging culture.

When a Christian engages culture, what should be the ultimate purpose or motivation?

For instance, if a Christian is a teacher in a public school, how should he/she view his/her role as a teacher? What should be his/her ultimate goal with each of his/her students: to teach grammar and arithmetic or to share the Gospel in word and/or deed? **Look up 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, and use this passage to explain your answer.**

5. According to Abraham Kuyper, what is the “dominating principle of Christian truth”?
What does this mean in your life?

6. How do we see this “dominating principle” in the following Scripture passages:
Genesis 1:1-4; Matthew 10:29-31; Revelation 4:11?

7. The story of Jorge Crespo and the García Moreno Prison demonstrates the power of a Christian worldview in action in the midst of dark and evil surroundings. Have you ever experienced a similar surprise, finding God using Christians for His glory in an unexpected place?

DEFINITIONS

1. **Common grace:** the means by which God’s power sustains creation, holding back the sin and evil that results from the Fall and that would otherwise overwhelm His creation like a great flood. This truth is really best understood as a dimension of God’s providence.
2. **Worldview:** the sum total of our beliefs about the world, the “big picture” that directs our daily decisions and actions. Each worldview answers three basic questions: (1) Where did we come from, and who are we? (2) What has gone wrong with the world? (3) What can we do to fix it?
3. **Christian worldview:** a biblical worldview, i.e., one based upon God’s revelation in Scripture.

KEY CONCEPTS

1. Every Christian is called to use his/her specific gifts and talents to work to the glory of God by upholding the created institutions of family and society, pursuing science and scholarship, creating works of art and beauty or helping to heal those suffering from the results of the Fall.
2. The underlying purpose and the guiding motivation for a Christian “redeeming culture” should be that the message of the Gospel clearly goes forth. A Christian shouldn’t allow cultural pursuits or social justice reforms to be an end in themselves. For instance, a Christian shouldn’t write a symphony for the purpose of writing a symphony, build an orphanage merely to have an orphanage or teach a child to read simply to teach a child to read. A Christian should write a symphony so that his/her audiences can know that he/she does all for the glory of a God called Jesus Christ; a Christian should help to pass a law protecting the institution of the family so that families are less dysfunctional and are able to raise children whose hearts are less hardened to the Gospel; a Christian should teach a child to read so that he/she can read Scripture and learn the Gospel.
3. In every topic we investigate, from ethics to economics to ecology, the truth is found only in relationship to God and His revelation—the Bible.
4. We are commanded both to preach the Good News and to bring all things into submission to God’s will, by defending and living out God’s truth *in the unique historical and cultural conditions of our age*. To engage the world, we must first understand the ideas that compete for people’s minds and hearts.