

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW I

Answer Key



CROSSROADS
PRISON MINISTRIES

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW I

HOW NOW SHALL WE LIVE?

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A Note to Mentors about Christian Worldview I & II

By the time Crossroads students have reached the Christian Worldview courses, it is our hope that they will have studied the Bible in depth and developed a firm grasp of the truths therein. It is important to remember, however, that the Christian Worldview courses are not a Bible study, per se.

Instead, the study of Christian worldview is a study of how to apply what we know about God to our world, culture, institutions and daily life. Some students might be unfamiliar with this approach if they have only experienced traditional Bible studies. Remind these students that if we really believe that Christianity is true, it will permeate all aspects of our lives.

That being said, it is important to recognize that the beliefs articulated by Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey in *How Now Shall We Live?* are only one expression of the Christian worldview. This set of beliefs is shared by many Christians today—but not by all. Christians in different denominations, cultures or life situations may differ significantly on the views presented in this book. However, instead of focusing on the differences among Christians, we rejoice that all can come together and worship God as one body.

Crossroads encourages mentors to help their students both understand and challenge the views presented in *How Now Shall We Live?* In this way, students can develop a robust and mature worldview of their own. Challenge generalizations and oversimplifications by asking questions such as “Can you think of any exceptions to this statement?” and “What arguments could be made against this line of reasoning?” Feel free to offer insight and experiences from your own life. Listen intently to your students’ questions and encourage critical thinking.

At Crossroads, we believe that sincere and earnest questioning can be a constructive experience for growing Christians. So long as inquiring minds are bent on finding the truth, they shall find God.

COURSE INTRODUCTION

In *Christian Worldview I* and *Christian Worldview II* you will learn how to take Christian knowledge and Christian piety and apply it to all of your life—from the workplace, to the voting booth, to the family life, to the movie theater on a Saturday night. You will develop a worldview: a grid through which you will analyze and understand the world. Based upon the truth of Scripture and the redemption story of Christ, this course will help you to answer life's big questions and combat the false philosophies of the world through Christ's truth and love. This course will equip you to influence culture and point others to Christ.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Students will apply biblical teachings to all of life, forming a Christian worldview.
2. Students will develop knowledge of our culture's competing false worldviews and learn to analyze them from a Christian worldview.
3. Students will write comprehensive and thoughtful short answers and essays analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating information presented in the text *How Now Shall We Live?*
4. Students will incorporate Scripture in their work throughout this course, applying personal knowledge of scriptural texts to questions and interacting with scriptural texts provided in lessons.
5. Students will summarize, analyze, evaluate and synthesize extended quotes from theologians, authors, philosophers and other influential thinkers.

COURSE STRUCTURE

There are 13 lessons in this course, and each lesson follows the same basic format. Each lesson is based on a chapter or group of chapters from the book *How Now Shall We Live?* by Charles Colson. The lessons require you to summarize, synthesize, analyze and evaluate information from this book. The lessons also require you to take knowledge and concepts covered in the text and apply them to new situations. You will be challenged to think critically, write reflectively and apply thoughtfully. This may involve drawing from the knowledge you gained in other Crossroads courses, and it may involve finding Scriptures on your own to answer questions.

Each lesson begins with a fill-in-the-blank section of quotes taken directly from the text, and each lesson ends with a recap of key terms and concepts. Some lessons also have matching or multiple choice sections. Each lesson also contains a lengthy section of essays; essays must be answered in complete sentences and in paragraph format. A structured essay is not simply your thoughts written randomly. In a structured essay, you are expected to write in a planned and organized manner. Be sure to think over your answer before you begin writing; you may find it helpful to jot down notes or to create a brief outline.

We hope that you are enriched, encouraged and empowered through your studies in *Christian Worldview I* and *Christian Worldview II*. Please take some time right now to ask God to help you as you complete these lessons. Pray that He will help you work to the glory of God as you develop a Christian worldview and learn more of the treasures of His Word.

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Lesson 1

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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 CULTURE is a betrayal of our biblical MANDATE and our own heritage because it denies God’s SOVEREIGNTY over all of LIFE .”
2. “Only CHRISTIANITY offers a comprehensive WORLDVIEW that covers all areas of life and thought, every aspect of creation.”
3. A worldview is, “the sum total of our BELIEFS about the WORLD , the ‘big picture’ that directs our daily DECISIONS and ACTIONS .”
4. “In the first chapter of John, Christ is called the LOGOS . In the Greek, LOGOS literally means the IDEA , the word...”
5. “Renewal can occur when CHRISTIANS are committed to living out their FAITH , seeing the world as GOD sees it, viewing reality through the lens of DIVINE REVELATION .”
6. “...truth is found only in relationship to GOD and his REVELATION .”
7. “No transgression of MORAL LAW is without painful CONSEQUENCES .”

SHORT ANSWER

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

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

1. **Student answers may vary on the following questions.**
 - 2.
 - 3.
2. Answer the following with a brief sentence:
 - A. What is the basis or foundation for a Christian worldview?
God’s revelation in Scripture is the foundation of a Christian worldview.
 - B. According to Cornelius Plantinga, what does it mean to be wise?
According to Plantinga, to be wise is to know reality and then accommodate yourself to it.
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. **Answers may vary. Feel free to list areas in which you personally are struggling to live out your faith.**
 - 2.
 - 3.

4. What can you do to allow your love for God to influence your actions in the above situations?

Student answers will vary.

5. Thinking over your testimony, what does it mean to you that “Jesus is the origin and end of all things, the Alpha and Omega; nothing has meaning apart from Him”?

Student answers will vary.

ESSAY

Please answer essay questions in paragraph format. The answers to essay questions in this course will not be found *exclusively* in the chapters you read from *How Now Shall We Live?* You will have to think critically, drawing from your own knowledge of Scripture, quotes provided in the question or, for some questions, your own personal experience.

Note to mentors: Students may not pick up on every nuance of a question or Scripture passage in their answers. In order to provide you, the mentor, with a comprehensive understanding of each question, this answer key includes detailed answers and touches on some complex topics. Your student may not have the knowledge base to answer in such a detailed manner. However, watch for correct interpretation of Scripture, understanding of key concepts and ideas and thoughtful answers reflecting a grasp of the material.

1. What is “common grace,” and what is the Christian’s responsibility in light of it? According to this lesson, why is this term best understood as a dimension of God’s providence?

According to the glossary in the Systematic Theology text, common grace is “a kind of grace or favor that God gives to all without distinction and that includes positive things for this life such as discovering truth, the restraint of sin, experiencing God’s blessings and doing external good things, but does not include salvation.”

In *How Now Shall We Live?*, we see that we are “agents of God’s common grace...called to help sustain and renew his creation, to uphold the created institutions of family and society, to pursue science and scholarship, to create works of art and beauty, and to heal and help those suffering from the results of the Fall.” In other words, your student should explain that we are to work to reverse the effects of the Fall. All of creation, including mankind, was made to bring glory to God. Christians should take every thought captive for Christ and use every action to bring glory to His name. For instance, as God has given us minds, we are to use them to study His Word and learn about His creation. As God has given us the institutions of society, marriage and government, we are to work to restore health and peace to these institutions. As God has given us the ability to make music and

literature, we are to use them to make art that reflects the beauty and/or truth of God and His Word.

However, we also recognize that true grace is linked to salvation through Christ. Therefore, any earthly “blessings” people receive will not be to their spiritual benefit without salvation. That is why Christians always bring the Gospel as they work within culture.

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.

For the first part of the question, answers may vary. Examples of a Christian active in “redeeming culture” are as follows: vacation Bible schools in your local neighborhood, supporting pro-life rallies, working as a judge or a lawyer to support the institution of the family, writing music that has lyrics that bring God glory, honoring the Sabbath as a testimony to your neighbors, etc.

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.**

The first part of this question (What should be the ultimate purpose or motivation?) is really pivotal. If a Christian does not understand the foundation and the goal of engaging culture, humanitarian efforts can be achieved, but the Gospel is lost. The ultimate goal in all these things should be that the message of the Gospel goes forth loud and clear. A Muslim can be a teacher in an inner-city, public school, and he/she can show students kindness and stability and support. However, only a Christian teacher has the true story of redemption. The ultimate goal of the Christian teacher should be that his/her students would come to know God’s truth as proclaimed in the Gospel. This may be done through his/her personal testimony, the content he/she teaches, the influence he/she has on students and the words that he/she speaks. Engaging culture is not an end in itself; it is a means to end—to make loving and obedient disciples of Christ.

1 Corinthians 9:19-23 says, “Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.” Paul understood the

true foundation for a Christian worldview and the real motivation for “engaging culture”—the sake of the Gospel. He constantly sought ways to be used by God that some might be saved. Whatever a Christian does should be motivated by this. Encourage your student to think of ways to interact with unbelievers and to participate in culturally-restorative works, but also encourage him/her to think of ways to bring the Gospel in both *word* and *deed*.

3. *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, Question and Answer 1, states, “What is the chief end (purpose) of man? Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” In light of this confession, why did God create you? Why did He give you specific gifts and talents? Why did He give you the testimony you have? What are the gifts, the testimony and the situation in life He has given you? How can you use all those things to fulfill your chief end?

God created mankind to bring Himself glory. He created the plants, the animals and the laws of physics to bring Him glory as well. Scripture says that if people don’t worship God, then even the rocks will cry out. Thus, it is every Christian’s calling to use every ounce of his/her being to bring glory to God. This means using physical and intellectual abilities, personal experiences and even humility learned from past sins to bring glory to God.

Answers may vary on the last questions. If your student is struggling to think how he/she could use talents or a broken past to bring glory to God, offer some suggestions. Affirm and encourage your student by reminding him/her that he/she *was* created uniquely by God with specific abilities and opportunities.

4. A. Is it necessary to define and understand our own Christian worldview? Why or why not?

Answers should reflect the following statement by Colson about a Christian worldview: “First, it enables us to make sense of the world we live in and thus order our lives more rationally. Second, it enables us to understand forces hostile to our faith, equipping us to evangelize and to defend Christian truth as God’s instruments for transforming culture.” In addition, the student should mention that a Christian worldview involves more than privatized faith (personal piety, Bible study and prayer). Personal piety is the starting place, the central way in which a Christian grows to know the heart of God and is filled with zeal for missions and ministry. However, it is not the ending place. Personal piety should lead to an active faith of witnessing, service and engaging culture. One should flow out of the other. From page *xi* of the Introduction, “It is not enough to focus exclusively on the spiritual, on Bible studies and evangelistic campaigns, while turning a blind eye to the distinctive tensions of contemporary life.”

- B. Is the necessity of a Christian worldview implied in Scripture? Why is it important to have one comprehensive worldview rather than different worldviews for each circumstance or situation in life you encounter?

Answers may vary as there are many passages the student could choose to cite. The following are some examples: 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” Here is the Christian worldview, a personal philosophy for all of life: everything a Christian does should be done for God’s glory. In Matthew 25, Jesus teaches His disciples that when they give water to the thirsty or give clothes to the naked or visit those in prison, it is as if they did these things for Jesus. “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”

Christians are thus commanded to care for the poor and not ignore the needs of the hurting and lonely. In another example, Micah 6:8 says, “He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” Here a Christian worldview is implied in that Christians are to care about social laws and justice and to show kindness unto others.

It is extremely important that a Christian have one comprehensive worldview, for Christianity must affect ALL areas of our lives. As Jesus said in Luke 10:27, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind.” There is no dichotomy between public life and private life, between how a Christian views making money and how a Christian views spending money, for example. All falls under the rule of Christ, thus all should fit into one worldview.

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

Abraham Kuyper, paraphrased by Colson, said that “the dominating principle of Christian truth is not soteriological (i.e., justification by faith) but rather cosmological (i.e., the sovereignty of the triune God over the whole cosmos, in all its spheres and kingdoms, visible and invisible).”

Student answers will vary for the second portion of the question, but should reflect the basic understanding that, above all, the Christian believes that God is Lord over all, and this understanding dictates all action (private and public). If God is the Creator and Sustainer of the cosmos, then He is most certainly Lord over your work and play and rest and entertainment.

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

The first passage (Genesis) is the creation story in which we learn that God called the entire world into existence by the power of His Word; He made all of creation. He did not create a blob of cells that exploded into the world, nor did He watch as the world called itself into existence. He actively created the universe, and in His creation of the universe, He determined a purpose for every creature and every object.

In the second passage (Matthew), we read that even the seemingly insignificant details of life do not slip outside of God’s will. From the hairs on your head to the death of a tiny sparrow, God not only *created* every detail and *knows* every detail, but He also *controls* every detail of the universe. In the third passage (Revelation), we see that we have our being through God. Every conscious or subconscious thought we have, every breath we take, every step of our foot upon the earth, we owe to God. What’s more, it is not just mankind that has his being in God; *all* things have their being in Him. For this reason, He is worthy of all our praise.

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?

Student answers will vary. Use this question as a chance to get to know your student. Feel free to send any interesting or thought-provoking responses to Crossroads.

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.

Lesson 2

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COMBATING FALSE WORLDVIEWS WITH THE TRUTH

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1. “The world is divided not so much by GEOGRAPHIC boundaries as by RELIGIOUS and CULTURAL traditions.”
2. “If all ideas are equally VALID, as postmodernism insists, then no idea is really worth our ALLEGIANCE; nothing is worth living or dying for—or even ARGUING about.”
3. “We must know not only what our WORLDVIEW is and why we BELIEVE it but also how to DEFEND it.”
4. “If our culture is to be TRANSFORMED, it will happen from the BOTTOM UP—from ordinary BELIEVERS practicing APOLOGETICS over the backyard fence or around the barbecue grill.”
5. “Our job is not only to build up the CHURCH but also to build a SOCIETY to the glory of God.”
6. “We must TRANSLATE God’s revelation into the LANGUAGE of the world.”
7. “When the church is truly the church, a COMMUNITY living in BIBLICAL obedience and contending for FAITH in every area of life, it will surely REVIVE the surrounding CULTURE or create a new one.”

SHORT ANSWER

1. According to the text, why might the most significant cultural clash rise from within the Western world, as opposed to an external clash of the Western world, the Eastern (Confucian) world and the Islamic world?

Colson says that he sees the cultures of the world melding into one. Through technology, the “U.S. cultural invasion” is infiltrating every culture in the world. He believes that the differences between Western and Eastern worlds are diminishing, and before long they

will be unrecognizable. All over the world, people will be watching the same television programs, listening to the same pop music, reading the same magazines and, through all these mediums, accepting the same cultural and moral values and beliefs. Furthermore, the images and information in the media are typically postmodern—anything goes, and there are no standards of morality. Computers and televisions, books, magazines and radio all over the world will be communicating the same lewd and materialistic message. So, the culture clash will then be between those who willingly accept the messages of the world and those who oppose such messages based upon a Judeo-Christian ethic.

2. As a Christian, how does what you believe differ from the following popularly accepted worldviews? In your answer, use the Scriptures listed with each question. Make sure that you define each secular worldview, and then respond to it with a Christian worldview.

A. Moral Relativism (Exodus 20:1-17 and John 14:6)

Define the secular worldview:

Moral relativism claims that there are no absolute standards of right and wrong. Morality and ethics are relative or changeable. Morality depends upon the circumstances or the person. Each person can determine what is right in his/her own eyes, for there are no over-arching principles of morality that apply to all men and women.

Response with a Christian worldview:

The Christian, however, believes in a God who has revealed Himself as absolute and unchanging. Furthermore, His standard of morality is based upon His unchanging character; thus it is also absolute. The first passage lists the moral law or the Ten Commandments; these are the absolute moral standards of God. In the second passage, Jesus calls Himself *the way, the truth and the life*. Christ uses the definite article, meaning that there is no other truth or life or way but through Him. Moral relativism says that all religions (or no religion) can be right at the same time, but Christ says that He is the only, absolute, unchanging way to the Father.

B. Multiculturalism (Galatians 3:28)

Define the secular worldview:

According to Colson, multiculturalism is the belief that “all cultures are morally equivalent.” If there is no absolute truth and no standard of morality, often the result is people rooting their ultimate meaning in their culture. No culture can be right or wrong about its practices (think not only of traditional dress and cultural festivals but also of idol worship, polygamy and ethnic discrimination).

Response with a Christian worldview:

Christians, on the other hand, can never equate truth with the limited perspective of any one group. Truth is God’s perspective as revealed in Scripture. While we appreciate cultural diversity, we hold to a truth that transcends cultures. Galatians 3:28 points out that in Christ, “there is neither Jew nor Greek...for you are all one in Christ.” Make sure your student understands that becoming a Christian doesn’t eradicate one’s cultural heritage. In fact, throughout Scripture God works in particular cultural contexts. However, a Christian’s allegiance is first to Scripture, and a Christian’s identity is first in Christ. If there is a cultural practice that violates God’s word, scriptural teaching supersedes the cultural practice.

Some Christians define multiculturalism merely as encouraging and appreciating diversity of cultures and ethnicities. You may want to make sure that your student understands that there is a difference between appreciating aspects of different cultures and encouraging diversity in the church, and blindly accepting all cultural practices without thought to the ultimate standard of God.

C. Pragmatism (Hebrews 11:24-26)

Define the secular worldview:

Pragmatism is the belief that whatever appears to work best must be right. It is practicality superseding morality. For example, if a family wants to improve their living standard and having an abortion would save the most money in the long run, then it must be right to have an abortion.

Response with a Christian worldview:

The Christian is an idealist, judging actions not by what works, but by what ought to be. Also, the standard for what ought to be is not arbitrary; it is based upon divine objective standards. For a Christian, the end does not justify the means. We obey His law and then trust Him to care for our practical needs.

Hebrews 11:24-26 tells of the motive of Moses when he left Egypt; he turned away from a world of sin and pleasure for the sake of the promises of God. It would have been so much easier for Moses to stay in the palace of the pharaoh where he was comfortable and pampered. Instead he chose the way of suffering, to be beaten along with the slaves for the sake of Christ.

D. Utopianism (Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 3:23)

Define the secular worldview:

Since utopianism teaches that human nature is basically good, people do not corrupt society, societal structures do. Under utopianism, it only takes “the right social and economic structures [to] usher in an age of harmony and prosperity.”

Response with a Christian worldview

As Jeremiah 17:9 teaches, Christians know that sin comes from the heart of man and that it has deeply twisted human nature. According to Romans 3:23, all men have sinned. If men themselves are sinful, then none of our efforts can create Heaven on earth. No amount of social or economic engineering can create the perfect environment.

- E. This-world perspective (Colossians 3:2; 1 Peter 2:11)

Define the secular worldview:

This worldview is self-explanatory. The belief that there is no absolute truth, no God ruling the earth and no over-arching meaning to life has led naturalists to cling to this world. They embrace all that the world has to offer and fling themselves into fleshly pursuits because this life may be all that there is.

Response with a Christian worldview:

Christians, however, are pilgrims passing through this life (1 Peter 2:11). We know that life on earth isn't the end; the end is eternity where man will fellowship with God for eternity or spend eternity in agonizing separation from Him. As the text states, we "see things from an eternal perspective. Everything we do now has eternal significance, because one day there will be a judgment, and then it will become evident that our choices in this life have consequences that last into eternity."

Colossians 3:2 reminds us that because this world is only temporary, we should concentrate on the things that have eternal significance.

3. Colson begins the book by pointing out how detrimental it is for a Christian to turn his/her back on culture since Christians are meant to be the salt and light of the world. Then, in chapter 3, Colson lists a "this-world perspective" among *secular* and *ungodly* worldviews.

- A. How can a Christian actively engage culture and show Christ's love to the world while still setting his/her mind on things above and keeping a heavenly perspective?

For this question, you may want to remind your student that Paul says in Philippians 1:21, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." There is a tension between being "heavenly minded" and doing "earthly good." Everything a Christian does while on earth should be for a heavenly reason. We have a calling and a purpose while we live on earth, yet we are to remember that this world is not our home. Dying and being with Christ is much better than staying in our earthly bodies. But as long as we live, we are to do our best to make disciples of all people.

- B. Conversely, how does a Christian keep from being "too heavenly-minded that he/she is no earthly good"? Use the following Scriptures in your answer: Colossians 3 and Matthew 5:13-16.

Colossians 3 reminds believers that all of life is spiritual. The temptation for us, in our sinful nature, is to get caught up in daily tasks, to become so distracted by service projects and outreach and being involved in the world that, before we know it, we have replaced our Savior with an idol. As Christians engage culture, we should never forget that this temptation is constant.

At the same time, Matthew 5:13-16 teaches that believers are to have a preserving influence upon the world. Believers are to do good works before men so that they would “praise your Father in heaven.” The answer to avoiding idolatry and worldliness is not to flee to a “Christian bubble.” Nor is the answer to cut ourselves off from the world and hide in our rooms where temptation is controlled. God put Christians on the earth not so they can create ivory towers of safety, but so they can be witnesses for Christ.

4. A. As defined in the book, what is pre-evangelism?

Pre-evangelism refers to laying the foundation for understanding the Gospel.

- B. If you started a conversation with a man on an airplane, and the man was an atheist (someone who does not believe there is a God), how would you pre-evangelize?

Colson calls this, “addressing the huge gap between his worldview and mine.” If you were trying to share the Gospel with an atheist, there would be so many terms and concepts of Christianity that the atheist would disagree with or wouldn’t understand. For example, before this man can understand the forgiveness of the cross, he must understand sin. Before he can understand worship and the purpose of living, he must understand the existence of the human soul. Before he can understand moral absolutes, he must understand the holy God from Whom comes all morality.

- C. What kind of questions might you ask to discern his worldview? List at least two.

1. **Student answers will vary.**

2.

5. A. In your own words, define the term “apologetics.” Where does this term come from?

Colson explains that the word “apologetics” comes from the Greek word apologia, meaning “a defense or a vindication of what we believe.”

- B. Why should Christians be involved in apologetics?

Christians should be involved in apologetics to defend our faith because God has created us with minds capable of thinking and analyzing from a Christian perspective. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, Christians should be involved in apologetics as an evangelistic tool. This is how the apostle Paul used apologetics in Acts 17. As believers, God has changed our hearts, not so that we make a blind leap of faith into an illogical religion. Instead, He has changed our hearts so that He can use us as tools to change the hearts of others.

6. A. Is it possible to argue someone into believing the Gospel?

It may be possible to intellectually convince a man that the Gospel story is true or that the Bible is the true Word of God. However, only the Holy Spirit, through the gift of faith, can change a man's heart and cause him to believe.

B. In what manner does Colson say we are to give a reason for the hope that is within us?

Christianity is defensible and logical, and Christians have been given minds to reason and to think critically about ideas and opposing worldviews. However, Christians also have a hope within. We have Divine Love living in our souls, and we are the only people on earth who live without fear and without guilt, for we have been set free!

C. Should the purpose of pre-evangelism be to “prove your opponent’s worldview incorrect”? If yes, explain. If no, then what is the purpose of pre-evangelism?

NO, the true purpose of apologetics is not to back others into a corner until they have to admit that you are right, but to simultaneously communicate the *love* and the *truth* of the Gospel.

MATCHING

Please write the correct letter next to the corresponding term.

(Hint: be careful to read all of the options, because many of these terms sound similar.)

 E Theism

 A Existentialism

 C Postmodernism

 G Naturalism

 F Pragmatism

 I Utopianism

 H Multiculturalism

 B This-world perspective

 D Moral Relativism

A. The belief that life is absurd and meaningless and that the individual self must create his/her own meaning by his/her own choices

B. When one considers only what happens on earth in this age and this life

C. The belief that there is no universal, overarching truth, and that all ideas and beliefs are social constructions shaped by class, gender, ethnicity, geography, age, etc.

D. The belief that there is no transcendent source of moral truth, and that we construct morality; every principle is a personal preference

- E. The belief that there is an intelligent being who created the world with order and purpose
- F. The belief that there is no absolute standard of right and wrong; therefore, whatever works best is right
- G. The belief that natural causes are enough to explain the existence of and purpose for the world
- H. The belief that all cultures are morally equivalent and all cultural practices should be celebrated regardless of their morality
- I. The belief that, since human nature is basically good, man can create a perfect society on earth

ESSAY

1. Think about your daily life. What worldviews have confronted you, and in what form did they appear? (Remember that the examples listed in this chapter are not the only worldviews by which people live. You may have encountered other worldviews throughout your life.)

Student answers will vary. Please feel free to share any moments when you were confronted with a foreign worldview. Explain how you responded and whether or not your response reflected a Christian worldview.

How did you respond then?

How would you respond now?

2. Colson speaks of the pervasive influence of American culture upon the rest of the world. Through technology, the values of our culture (or at least of our media) are affecting people worldwide.
 - A. Do you believe that listening to pop music or watching afternoon sitcoms can really influence a culture?

Ideas influence people, and media are communicating ideas. It is very difficult to watch programs, listen to music, hear speeches and read books without being affected by the ideas communicated through these media. However, the influence of the world through media is often subtle. For instance, television programs don't begin with a disclaimer stating, "The purpose of this program is to convince you that premarital sex is OK." Instead, a television program shows all the characters engaging in premarital sex without consequences. That is how something as simple as listening to the radio or watching sitcoms can influence a culture. Seeing the same messages over and over again, people begin to change their worldview.

- B. Can you think of ways that the values of our culture have influenced you negatively?

For the second question, answers will vary. You may want to tell your student about a time when you noticed that your worldview was subtly influenced by the world.

- C. Read Philippians 4:8. Keeping this passage in mind, how can a Christian *live in this world* and keep him/herself unstained by the sinful thinking of the world?

The last question directly applies to the purpose of this course. A Christian can live in the world and yet keep a pure mind through a comprehensive Christian worldview informed by the Word. The influence of culture is sneaky and very destructive, but, as was pointed out earlier, the answer is not to retreat from culture. The answer is to approach it with a sanctified mind; to engage people conceptually. A Christian shouldn't listen to music, watch movies or go to plays with his/her analytical brain turned off. Rather, a Christian should go everywhere with a Christian worldview sifting, analyzing, evaluating and filtering information and ideas through a Christian worldview. Be sure to remind your student that this can be difficult because the influence of the world is powerful since it appeals to our sinful nature. That is why personal piety coupled with cultural engagement is necessary. We guard our minds and purify our hearts with the Word of God. As Philippians admonishes its readers, we must think on the things that reflect the beautiful and holy character of God. These things we hold as true and right; only then are we able to sift through the competing worldviews we encounter.

3. Friedrich Nietzsche was a nineteenth-century German philosopher famous for his atheistic writings. He claimed that “God is dead” and religion is nothing more than a human invention to cope with the evils of the world. Read the following selection from Nietzsche’s book *Beyond Good and Evil*; then answer the questions that follow.

Why atheism today?—“The father” in God is thoroughly refuted; likewise “the judge”, “the rewarder”. Likewise his “free will”: he does not hear—and if he heard he would still not know how to help. The worst thing is: he seems incapable of making himself clearly understood: is he himself vague about what he means?

To ordinary men, finally, the great majority, who exist for service and general utility and who *may* exist only for that purpose, religion gives an invaluable contentment with their nature and station, manifold peace of heart, an ennobling of obedience, one piece of joy and sorrow more to share with their fellows, and some transfiguration of the whole everydayness, the whole lowliness, the whole half-bestial poverty of their souls. Religion and the religious significance of life sheds sunshine over these perpetual drudges and makes their own sight tolerable to them...refreshing, refining, as it were *making the most use of* suffering, ultimately even sanctifying and justifying. Perhaps nothing in Christianity and Buddhism is so venerable as their art of teaching even the lowliest to set themselves through piety in an apparently higher order of things and thus to preserve their contentment with the real order, within which they live hard enough lives.¹

Explain what Nietzsche argues in this passage. From your reading in *How Now Shall We Live?*, what worldview(s) can you identify in this passage? Nietzsche makes some difficult statements and poses some hard questions. As a Christian, how would you respond to his atheistic arguments?

¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (London: Penguin Books, 1990).

In this passage, Nietzsche is denying the existence of God because he thinks God “does not hear—and if he heard he would still not know how to help.” Nietzsche argues that God is a concept of the human mind, which is proven by the fact that what everyone believes about Him is so inconsistent. According to Nietzsche, He “seems incapable of making himself clearly understood.” Therefore, Nietzsche goes on to explain that all religious people, particularly Christians and Buddhists, are weak men who have invented religion to give their lives meaning. They are slaves to their moral laws created in an attempt to ease the suffering of life.

While few people you meet in the world will quote Nietzsche, his philosophy is widespread. Basically, the worldviews seen in this passage are atheism and existentialism. Atheism is seen in the blatant denial of the existence of God. Existentialism (our choices individually define us) is implied when Nietzsche says that Christians and Buddhists create their own morality to make sense of their lives. Your student may point out other worldviews as well, because from the starting place of existentialism and atheism, other worldviews can result. For instance, if there is no God, then there is no standard, then anything goes—postmodernism. If anything goes, then whatever works best is right, which is the belief of utilitarianism and pragmatism.

Please evaluate your student’s answer based upon his/her understanding of the selection and the worldview terms covered earlier in this lesson.

For the last part of the question (As a Christian, how would you respond?) answers will vary. Your student may choose to start by proving the existence of God, addressing the assertion that religion is for weak people or by proving that just because religions do not agree does not mean that God is contradictory. Whichever direction your student chooses, please make sure that his/her answer is consistent and logical. Remind your student of Scripture passages that would support his/her answer.

4. There is an important place for personal, experiential testimonies, and each Christian experiences the grace of God in unique ways. However, many Christians base their argument for the existence of God and the truth of Christianity solely upon their own personal experience. For instance, “I know that the God of the Bible is real because one time I was sick, and when I prayed I got better.” Is that kind of argument unique to Christianity? In other words, can Buddhists or Mormons use the same argument to claim their religion is true? What is it about Christianity that makes our faith unlike any other faith in the world?

There is a place for personal testimonies like this, but they don’t necessarily help in responding to the doubts of the unbelieving world. Over-emphasis upon personal experience can serve to support Nietzsche’s point that religion is an invention of man to numb human pain.

An argument like the one given above is not unique to Christianity. A Buddhist could claim to have been healed by Buddha. A man could be destitute and become rich after converting to Islam—his conclusion would be that Allah must be real. Is Christianity like every other religion Nietzsche calls inconsistent and merely serving the purpose of soothing people’s pain? Absolutely not. As your student learned in the course *Great Truths of the Bible*, there are precious and unique truths in the Christian faith. If your student has a

hard time answering this question, remind him/her to think about the foundational truths of Christianity—sin, redemption, the cross, a simultaneously personal and omnipotent God. No other religion has these concepts. No other religion can explain what to do with guilt and sin. No other religion has a personal God—incarnate—who saves unconditionally. Christianity is the only religion in the world that is not based upon works; Christians are the only people who can truly be motivated by love. We believe in Jesus Christ not because He makes us rich or heals our bodies or gives us children or provides for our earthly needs (though He may do all those things). We believe in Jesus Christ because He healed our soul, and everything we do is a response of love to that truth.

5. According to chapter 3, what is naturalism? How does naturalism lead to relativism? How does relativism lead to existentialism? How does existentialism lead to postmodernism? How is existentialism related to multiculturalism?

Naturalism is the belief that the world came about by nothing more than natural causes, and natural causes are enough to explain the world. Naturalism has no need of a God or even a transcendent being because the world functions and creates on its own. If there is no God, then there is no one to determine moral standards; therefore, there must be no absolute truth—relativism. If everything is relative and there are no standards, then every individual must create his/her own reality—existentialism. If everyone creates his/her own reality, then everyone’s reality is different and anything goes; there are no absolutes, only differing group “perspectives”—postmodernism. If everything is relative, then all cultures and all cultural practices are morally equivalent. Furthermore, everyone creates his/her own reality, and the most logical place to find that reality/identity is in one’s culture—multiculturalism.

6. Read 1 Corinthians 1:20-27. What does this passage say about wisdom? What is the wisdom of the world? Why does this passage say that the wisdom of God is foolishness to the world?

This passage says that wisdom without God is foolishness because it does not lead to knowing Him. The wisdom of the world is motivated by selfishness and sinful desires, but the wisdom of God is Christ crucified. Without the Holy Spirit, the world does not understand that God could become weak to show His power. The world scoffs at the Gospel message, but “the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength.”

7. Read Ecclesiastes 1:16-18. What does this passage say about wisdom and knowledge? Why do you think this passage calls pursuing wisdom and knowledge “chasing after the wind”?

This passage says that with wisdom comes sorrow, and with knowledge comes grief. After a cursory reading, this may sound like the Scriptures disdain using our minds and exalt ignorance instead, but this is not at all the point of this passage. In verse 16, Solomon tells how he began to pursue knowledge for pride’s sake. He thought to himself that he was more knowledgeable than any other ruler before him. He sought after wisdom to puff himself up, and then wisdom became sorrow to him because it could not satisfy his soul. It was like throwing all his energy into chasing after the wind. Just as you can’t catch the wind, so chasing after knowledge to exalt yourself only leaves one unsatisfied.

8. Now read 1 Kings 3:5-12. What does Solomon ask for? How does God respond to his request? Why?

Solomon asks for wisdom in this passage. Your student may be using the NIV translation which renders it “a discerning heart.” God is pleased with Solomon’s request because it was not for selfish gain. Solomon asked for wisdom so that he would be better equipped to serve his kingdom—his attitude was humble and his motivation was service toward others.

9. The purpose of this course is to help you establish a Christian worldview, to develop a Christian mind. This involves thinking, analyzing, developing wisdom and discernment and using your intellect to gain knowledge about the world. With this in mind, what do we learn from these passages about knowledge and wisdom? Should Christians pursue wisdom and knowledge? If so, then *how* should we pursue it? What should be our attitude?

Our minds are gifts from God, and He desires us to use them for His glory. When used in this manner, wisdom and knowledge can be great tools for the Kingdom of God. It is important as Christians to develop our minds and intellects, to learn how to think from a comprehensive Christian worldview. However, our attitude should always be one of humility. Intellectual pursuit disconnected from the heart results in godless gain. We do not pursue knowledge and wisdom for our own sake, but for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

10. Solomon asks God for wisdom in 1 Kings 3, and God rewards him for this request. Yet, Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 1 that pursuing wisdom is chasing after the wind. How do you reconcile these two passages?

When, out of selflessness, Solomon asked for a discerning heart to govern his kingdom, God was pleased with his request. However, when Solomon used his wisdom for selfish pursuit, a good gift became a sorrowful curse. Christians should strive to use their intellects for apologetics, engaging culture and studying His Word and His world, but the instant we use our intellects for any purpose other than the glory of God, wisdom becomes a sinful tool.

DEFINITIONS

See Matching section.

1. **Apologetics:** a defense or vindication of what we believe
2. **Pre-evangelism:** addressing the gap between the Christian worldview and various secular worldviews before the Gospel is presented in its entirety

KEY CONCEPTS

1. God calls us to love people enough to go where they are—not only physically but also conceptually.
2. There is absolute truth and a moral standard because there is a God who is absolute truth and holiness.
3. The primary clash of worldviews in the world is turning into a clash between those who hold to a Judeo-Christian ethic and those who accept post-modern ideology.
4. Many worldviews confront Christians, but we must remember that, while belief in the Bible as God's Word may seem like folly to the world, the only true folly in God's eyes is to reject His Word.

Lesson 3

Name _____

ID# _____

HOUSING _____

INSTITUTION _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

IN THE BEGINNING

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

1. “Naturalism is as much a PHILOSOPHY, a worldview, a personal BELIEF system as any RELIGION is.”
2. “In every HUMAN BEING is a deep, ongoing search for meaning and TRANSCENDENCE—part of the IMAGE of God in our very nature.”
3. “We must challenge the assumption that SCIENCE by definition means NATURALISTIC PHILOSOPHY.”
4. “After maintaining for centuries that the physical universe is ETERNAL and therefore needs no creator, science today has uncovered dramatic new EVIDENCE that the universe did have an ULTIMATE origin, that it began at a FINITE time in the past—just as the BIBLE teaches.”
5. “We should not OPPOSE science with religion; we should oppose BAD science with BETTER science.”
6. “When we try to explain any natural phenomenon, there are three possibilities: CHANCE, LAW or DESIGN.”

SHORT ANSWER

1. According to Carl Sagan, what is the credo (or saying) of naturalism? In what ways is this saying religious?

The credo of naturalism is, “Nature is all that is or ever was or ever will be.” This saying is religious in that it mimics religious forms such as the *Gloria Patri*. It is meant to replace religion with a religion that claims to not be religious at all. However, naturalistic science is religious because it explains where life comes from and where it is going; it is a comprehensive worldview; it is a personal belief system.

2. Ultimately, only the Gospel of Christ applied to a man's heart by the Holy Spirit can "prove" that God is real. However, chapter 7 points out the need for scientific proofs as well. Describe at least two scientific proofs Colson gives pointing to the existence of an Intelligent Designer.

Answers may vary, but should come from the examples given on pages 62-64 of *How Now Shall We Live?* The following is a list of examples of proofs of Intelligent Design: the earth's orbit, the temperature of the earth, the existence of water, the velocity of the "big bang," the size of protons and neutrons, the electrical charge of protons and electrons and the balance in electrical charges of the proton and electron.

3. At the time of the Reformation, theologian John Calvin called man's heart a "perpetual factory of idols."¹ Why do you think the Bible primarily "preaches against idolatry, not atheism"?

As we learned in the first lesson of this course, the Westminster Confession of Faith teaches that God created man to worship Him. Though man may not be willing to admit that the God of the Bible is real, man knows in his heart that he must worship something. Colson calls this desire to search for something transcendent outside of ourselves part of the image of God in us. Since man was created to fellowship with God and his sinful nature rejects the God of the Bible, man creates his own god. Man becomes an idol-maker, rather than a true atheist, for even the proclaimed atheist has made his own god—nature, science or even himself.

4. Read Hebrews 11:3. How does this verse respond to naturalistic origin-of-the-universe theories?

This verse rejects any naturalistic explanation of the origin of the universe. Matter hasn't always existed; it was called into existence by the voice of God. Everything you see around you wasn't always there; someone or something had to put it there. The order and purpose of the world cries out to humans that there was and is an Intelligent Designer.

¹ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), 1:97.

5. What are the first two laws of thermodynamics, and how do they affect the origin-of-the-universe debate?

First Law:

This law is called, “The Law of the Conservation of Energy or Matter.” To state simply, it means that matter cannot be created or destroyed. This natural law demonstrates that either every single minutiae of the universe has always existed, or a being external to the universe formed it from void.

Second Law (entropy):

This law is called, “The Law of Decay,” and it means that a closed system will tend from order to disorder. As the universe is a closed system (i.e., not receiving energy from an external source), it is gradually disintegrating. The illustration that Colson uses is a wound up clock slowly unwinding, running down. If the clock is winding down, at some point something must have wound it up. This is seen in the “red shift” of stars and the expansion of the universe.

MATCHING

Please write the correct letter next to the corresponding term.

(Hint: be careful to read all of the options, because many of these terms sound similar.)

 D Anthropic principle

 B Participatory anthropic principle

 E Explanatory filter

 A Big-bang theory

 C Many worlds hypothesis

- A. The proposal that our universe began with a cosmic explosion perfectly calibrated to engineer life on our planet
- B. The philosophical idea that the universe did not fully exist until human beings emerged to observe it
- C. The theory that there are an infinite number of universes, all with different laws and different values for fundamental numbers (such as the measure of gravity, proton charge, etc.)
- D. The notion that the physical structure of the universe is exactly what it must be in order to support life; specifically, that the laws of physics were exquisitely calibrated for the existence of human life
- E. The method, comprised of three components (chance, law or design), by which we try to explain any natural phenomenon

ESSAY

1. After the confrontation with his daughter, Dave Mulholland discovered that he didn't know how to defend his Christian faith against false science. He knew that he *did* believe, as he had since childhood, but he didn't have any concrete, demonstrable points to share with his doubting daughter. Have you ever been in a similar situation when you were asked to defend your faith to someone, and you had no demonstrable points?

Student answers will vary. Feel free to (either in this lesson or in your encouragement letter) share your own experiences with your student.

2. In the above situation, do you feel that your testimony may have been more effective with demonstrable points? Why or why not? **Support your answer with Scripture.**

Student answers will vary; however, your student should begin to see the value of Christians preparing to give reasons for their faith. Not every unbeliever will be swayed by an emotional personal testimony nor will all be convinced with intellectual appeal, though there is a place for both. Simply stating, "I believe because I was raised that way," or, "I believe because Christianity fixed everything that was wrong with my life," will not be sufficient. Any person of any religion can easily refute these points (e.g., "I was raised another way," or "Everything in my life is better since *rejecting* Christianity"). Make sure your student remembers from earlier lessons that it is not possible to argue a person into faith in Jesus Christ, nor is it necessary for every Christian to hold a master's degree in science so that he/she can argue the faith against intellectuals. However, proofs can strengthen the believer's faith by dispelling doubts. Proofs can also be used as a "pre-evangelism" tool.

Look up the passages your student uses to support his/her answer to see if they are used appropriately. If your student has a hard time finding applicable passages, here are some suggestions: 1 Peter 3:15; John 18:37-38; John 3:11-12.

3. What is lacking in the big-bang theory? Which question does it fail to answer? Use the text to explain how some scientists have attempted to answer this question. How does this show that faith and science are related?

The big-bang theory doesn't answer the question, "From where did matter come?" It attempts to explain *how* the world began—a giant explosion of matter—but it doesn't explain who or what put the matter there in the first place. The text talks about Carl Sagan who attempted to answer this question by proposing the "oscillating universe" theory. This is the theory that the universe is now expanding from a big bang, but it will eventually begin to contract again until it reaches a tiny point of tight energy. Then another big bang will occur causing the universe to expand again and then contract again—all in infinitive sequence. However, this theory still doesn't answer the question! Where did this energy come from? Where did the matter come from? Who or what set this cycle in motion?

To believe this theory is to put your faith in matter—after all, matter becomes the beginning and the end of all things. Thus, science cannot disconnect itself from religion. Every origin-of-the-universe theory betrays a man's personal belief system. Because science intersects with philosophy, it is impossible to explain where the world came from, how humans came into existence and/or what we are doing here without presenting a worldview.

4. Read 2 Peter 3:3-9. What does Peter say about the last days in this passage? How do Carl Sagan's words echo the remarks of the wicked in this passage? How does Peter respond to the wicked?

Peter says that the last days will be filled with scoffers who deny the Lord's return because they desire to fulfill their own evil desires rather than wait on the Lord. They say, "Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." In essence, they say that nothing divine has ever or will ever intercede because the world simply exists, carrying on in its own patterns as it always has. In other words, their answer sounds exactly like Carl Sagan's statement, "The Cosmos is all that is, or ever was, or ever will be."

Peter responds by affirming that God created the world. Everything doesn't continue on as usual because there was a Divine act in the beginning. Furthermore, God is still working as the heavens and the earth are being "kept for the day of judgment." At the end of time, when the day of the Lord comes, God will again intercede. Peter reminds his readers not to be impatient because man has a skewed perception of time. God's time is not man's time, and "slow" to man is the blink of an eye to God. He did come, and He will come again. If contemporary scientists cite billion-year figures to explain the history of the universe, surely they can wait a few thousand years for Christ to return.

5. According to 2 Peter 3:9, why has the Lord not yet returned? What must Christians do while we wait for the return of Christ?

God is patiently waiting for His church to be gathered from all ends of the earth. He is waiting for all who will be saved to “come to repentance” before He returns. The Christian’s task, then, is to fulfill the Great Commission, for we are the agents through which Christ will call His children to Himself. We have the awesome privilege of being part of the unfolding will of God as He brings each chosen saint into His Kingdom. Only He knows each name and face; only He knows the day and hour of His return, but when all that are His are gathered, He will fulfill His promise.

6. We read in chapter 7 about how naturalistic philosophy becomes a religion to those who embrace it. Think about conversations you have had, television shows you have viewed, books you have read, billboards you have seen, etc. Have you had any contact with a nature-based religion? Can you name and describe any nature-based religions? Tell about how you came into contact with these religions.

Student answers will vary; some students may leave this question blank. If you find this question blank, do not mark it incorrect. Probably the most popular nature-based religion is Wicca—a New-Age religion that believes nature is divine. Everything, whether animate or inanimate, has a spirit, and the earth is seen as a nurturing female presence. Other nature-based religions may include Paganism (also “Neo-Paganism”), American Indian religions and Druidism. Your student may discuss something he/she has read or heard where naturalistic philosophy was proclaimed.

7. Are there aspects of nature and our environment that suggest an Intelligent Designer? Where have you seen the hand of the Creator in the natural world?

Students’ answers will vary. Feel free to share any exceptional essays with Crossroads.

8. Charles Darwin, in his mid-nineteenth-century book, *The Origin of Species*, proposed the theory of evolution. Today, this book has become the “bible of naturalism,” with the majority of scientists, professors and even public school teachers proclaiming it as truth. According to Darwin, each species “adapts” to its environment over thousands or millions of years, evolving from one life form to another, like the famous example of an ape evolving into a human. As these species evolve, the strongest and healthiest survive while the weak die off. This is called “survival of the fittest,” and in this way nature “determines” its own destiny. Read the following excerpt in which Darwin explains this theory.

Owing to this struggle for life, any variation, however slight, and from whatever cause proceeding, if it be in any degree profitable to an individual of any species, in its infinitely complex relations to other organic beings and to external nature, will tend to the preservation of that individual, and will generally be inherited by its offspring. The offspring, also, will thus have a better chance of surviving, for, of the many individuals of any species which are periodically born, but a small number can survive. I have called this principle, by which each slight variation, if useful, is preserved, by the term of Natural Selection, in order to mark its relation to man’s power of selection. We have seen that man by selection can certainly produce great results, and can adapt organic beings to his own uses, through the accumulation of slight but useful variations, given to him by the hand of Nature. But Natural Selection, as we shall hereafter see, is a power incessantly ready for action, and is as immeasurably superior to man’s feeble efforts, as the works of Nature are to those of Art.

How fleeting are the wishes and efforts of man! How short his time! And consequently how poor will his products be, compared with those accumulated by Nature during whole geological periods. Can we wonder, then, that Nature’s productions should be far ‘truer’ in character than man’s productions; that they should be infinitely better adapted to the most complex conditions of life, and should plainly bear the stamp of far higher workmanship?

It may metaphorically be said that natural selection is daily and hourly scrutinizing, throughout the world, every variation, even the slightest; rejecting that which is bad, preserving and adding up all that is good; silently and insensibly working, whenever and wherever opportunity offers, at the improvement of each organic being in relation to its organic and inorganic conditions of life.

When we see leaf-eating insects green, and bark-feeders mottled grey; the alpine ptarmigan white in winter, the red-grouse the colour of heather, and the black-grouse that of peaty earth, we must believe that these tints are of service to these birds and insects in preserving them from danger.²

What aspects of naturalism do we see presented here, and how does this reinforce the idea that naturalism is merely another religion?

Where does God fit in Darwin’s theory? He does not theorize about the origin of the universe, he merely explains the supposed process of the natural world’s evolution. According to Darwin, natural laws alone are capable of sustaining the world. Thus, nature is all there is and probably all there ever will be. Plants, animals and even people are not created with purpose and design; they evolve through chance, by natural processes. By ignoring God, Darwin paves the way for atheism. As we shall see developed more fully in the following question, Darwin replaces God with nature, his own invented deity.

² Charles Darwin, *Origin of the Species* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

9. Read Job chapters 38-39. Use this passage to respond to Darwin's impersonal naturalistic theory. With respect to the creation story, how does the message of the Bible give purpose and hope, and how does a naturalistic message lead to meaninglessness and hopelessness?

In Job 38-39, God answers Job's questions out of a whirlwind storm. He humbles him by telling him of His creation of the world, His knowledge and power over every animal, plant and inch of the earth. God tells Job that He was there at the birth of the universe, laying the earth's foundation and marking off its dimensions. He set everything in place—the sea, the clouds, the dirt, the flowers. He created the depths of the ocean and the tiniest atoms in a man's body.

This tears to pieces Darwin's theory of nature reigning supreme because according to Job, there is order, purpose and intentional beauty in the world. The useful plants and animals and laws of nature were created that way by an all-powerful God instead of evolving that way on their own. God made the balance of color, the beauty of a butterfly and the terror of a storm to reflect His glory and majesty.

In Darwin's world, we don't know how we got here or why we are here. Neither do we know where we are going; we merely know that nature selects her own future when the fittest rise to the top. A world run by naturalistic philosophy is a despairing world because there is no meaning, no real purpose to the world. There is no truth and no personal God; there is no hope for the future. On the other hand, Christianity tells of the true God who lived and lives, who created and continues to create. He breathed meaning and order into the world, and He has an ultimate plan for all of life. Man was created in His image for a specific purpose, and God has revealed Himself to His creation in a personal way.

10. Read Genesis chapter 1. Compare the "creation story" of evolution and the big-bang theory to the creation account of the Bible. Using this passage and what you learned from chapters 5-7, explain how the Christian worldview gives meaning to life and a basis for morality. How does the atheistic evolutionary worldview remove purpose for life and a basis for morality?

The big-bang theory says that life happened by chance, ends by chance and starts again by chance in an endless and meaningless cycle. There is no God, nothing and no one in control—just impersonal nature witnessing it all. No one speaks, no one creates, no one sustains, and no one intervenes. Living things compete with each other to avoid extinction, for only the fittest survive. Under this worldview, there can be no moral code and no purpose to life because everything happened on its own, by chance. There is no basis for kindness, ethics, decency, hard-work and peace because there is no one to call those things good or to command creation to pursue them. In fact, this worldview encourages selfish pursuit, for only the strong (who can trample the weak) will survive.

On the other hand, the Christian creation story tells of an all-powerful, almighty God who didn't just wind up the world and watch it spin. He actively created, and He actively sustains. Not only is He powerful and sovereign, He is also good. Life has meaning and purpose and a basis for morality because it is all rooted in Him. The basis for justice, kindness, hard-work, etc. is God Himself, His attributes. Man is part of something bigger than himself and bigger than a struggle for survival before the universe once again collapses into a tiny speck. Man is part of the unfolding will of a good and powerful God.

KEY CONCEPTS

1. The universe had a definite beginning and has a definite end—both of which have been determined by a Creator who has revealed Himself to His creation in the Bible.
2. The rejection of religion is itself a religion. Science can never be utterly divorced from religion, because at the very beginning of science lie philosophical propositions. Even naturalism and atheism are religious at their root—they may reject the God of the Bible, but they create their own gods as substitute deities.
3. Science can also never disprove intelligent design. Science practiced honestly and ethically will only reveal more of God’s creation and His Intelligent Design.
4. The Christian must guard against erring philosophy and science, which will often go unchallenged by the secular world. Many will be swayed by the “false prophets” of bad science, and it is the Christian’s responsibility to expose their falsehood.

Lesson 4

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THE LIE OF EVOLUTION

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1. “A little SCIENCE estranges a man from GOD. A lot of SCIENCE brings him back.”
2. “Life can be CREATED only by a(n) INTELLIGENT agent directing, CONTROLLING, and manipulating the process.”
3. “The advance of SCIENCE is not casting up new challenges to CHRISTIAN FAITH.”
4. “In everyday life, we weigh NATURAL versus INTELLIGENT causes all the time.”
5. “There are no known PHYSICAL laws capable of creating a structure like DNA with high INFORMATION content.”
6. “When it comes to the origin of life, SCIENCE is squarely on the side of CREATION by an INTELLIGENT agent.”
7. “The natural tendency in LIVING THINGS is not to continue changing indefinitely but to stay close to the ORIGINAL TYPE.”
8. “The biblical teaching of creation is not just a THEOLOGICAL DOCTRINE; it is the very FOUNDATION of everything Christians believe.”

TRUE OR FALSE AND SHORT ANSWER

1. T (F) An even fifty-fifty mixture of right and left-handed amino acids makes up the basic building blocks of life.

According to chapter 8, how does the answer to the previous question disprove scientists' ability to "create life" in a laboratory?

All living organisms require *only* left-handed amino acids, and laboratory experiments only produce a *mixture* of left-handed and right-handed amino acids. Furthermore, in the lab, scientists manipulate factors and control the outcomes of their experiments. These kinds of controlled circumstances would never occur in the natural world.

2. T F *Information theory* is the field of research that investigates the ways in which information is transmitted.

According to modern science, what are the only two possible ways to explain the origin of life, and how does information theory discount both of them?

The scientist has two ways to explain the origin of life—chance or natural law. However, both of these options “lead to structures with low information content.” For instance, the crystals that scientists form in their laboratories have low information content because they are a result of simple patterns repeated over and over. Naturally occurring patterns in nature (like ripples from waves on a beach) contain low information content as well. However, organisms are made up of parts with high information content. For instance, DNA consists of complex patterns for each of the millions of chemicals contained in it. Thus, the only way to explain the origin of DNA is the work an intelligent designer.

3. T F Science is continually casting up legitimate challenges to the Christian faith rather than uncovering evidence that what Christians believe about the natural world is true.
4. T F Plants and animals can be bred to further develop certain characteristics existing in their genetic information. However, plants and animals cannot evolve from one species to another. For instance, over millions of years, a dog cannot grow wings and become a species of bird.

After he returned from his voyage to the Galapagos Islands, what did Darwin observe that led him to believe animals evolve into new species? Why is his conclusion that animals evolve into new species impossible?

Darwin observed that pigeons can be bred to develop fantails, crops under their beaks, or hoods of feathers on their heads. He assumed that this meant as plants and animals adapt to their environment, they evolve into new species. However, what Darwin observed was change *within* a species. In the pigeon example, the birds did not change from one species to another—breeders merely selected particular genetic traits and “exaggerated” them. It is impossible for this evolution to continue to the point of crossing species because eventually the genes break down or level off. Eventually, genetic engineering reaches a ceiling, and the species begin to revert to their original state. In other cases, genetic engineering eventually leads to sterility or birth defects.

5. T F Genetic mutations can create new structures in an organism.

If this is true, explain the process of genetic mutations leading to new structures. Support your answer with at least one example. If this is false, what do genetic mutations produce and what do they not produce? Support your answer with an example.

Your student should recognize this answer is false. Genetic mutations merely produce “variations on a theme.” There are no new structures created by mutations. For instance, a fruit fly can develop more bristles on its back or longer wings, but it cannot develop feathers or fur. Mutations take an existing structure and change it; they do not produce parts where none previously existed.

6. T F Most genetic mutations do not improve a species. Instead they lead to devolution.

What is devolution, and how does it affect a species?

If evolution is the slow process of change by which a species improves, then devolution is exactly the opposite. It is the slow process of change by which a species deteriorates. Genetic mutations usually cause harmful changes that devolve a species, making it harder for a species to survive in the natural world.

7. T F There are transitional forms in the fossil record.

8. T F It is impossible for animals to evolve gradually because they are irreducibly complex.

Defend your answer and include a definition of the term “irreducible complexity.”

Living things are created with intricate and necessary body parts. If those parts were to change into something new, the animal would suffer during the time of transition. A fish can live happily in the sea, and a cat can live happily on dry ground. However, as Francis Schaeffer pointed out, if a fish were to grow lungs, it would drown. Animals cannot survive with slight modifications because they would be ill-functioning in their transitional forms. A fish cannot survive as half a fish and half a cat because the parts of a fish are necessary to life in its environment. Its parts are irreducibly complex, meaning that they cannot be broken down, changed, mutated or morphed. The parts of organisms are intricate, interrelated and complex.

ESSAY

1. Based upon your reading of chapter 10, prove that Darwinism is fundamentally a worldview rather than a scientific theory. The text gives examples of some evolutionists who admit that their theory is in reality a worldview. Cite a couple of these men to support your answer.

Earlier in this book we learned that a worldview is a system of thought that tells us where we came from, who we are, what has gone wrong with the world and what we can do to fix it. Evolutionary theory masquerades as a scientific theory when in reality it attempts to answer religious and philosophical questions. It says that we came from primordial slime, created by no one and for no purpose. Nature determines our future based upon our ability to survive in the world. With this explanation for the origin of life and this future for the cosmos, there is no need to determine what went wrong with the world or how to fix it, because there are no absolute standards for determining right and wrong. There is no truth and no transcendent meaning because there is no transcendent being to give purpose and meaning to life. At its core, evolutionism begins with naturalism, which claims that “all of life can be explained by natural causes acting randomly.”

For the second part of the question, there are several men your student may mention. His/her answer should come from the following list of men: William Provine, Richard Dawkins, Herbert Spencer, Richard Rorty, Thomas Huxley, Charles Hodge, and Richard Lewontin. Use chapter 10 to check your student’s answer to make sure he/she accurately represents the person’s argument.

2. Chapter 10 cites Richard Rorty, who before he embraced postmodernism, studied Christianity. He claims that the reason he rejected Christianity is because he found himself incapable of acting with humility as Christianity teaches. Think back to what you learned in Tier 1 about the fundamentals of Christianity and the radically unique, liberating message of the Gospel. What Rorty did not understand is what separates Christianity from every other religion in the world; it is the basis for the Gospel message, the Good News of Scripture. What fundamental truth of Christianity did Rorty not understand that led him to throw his hands up and give up on Christianity? Use at least one Scripture passage in your answer.

Sadly, Rorty did not comprehend the message of a Gospel of grace. Rorty was right that he is incapable of humility. On our own, left with nothing but will power and a sinful nature, no one is capable of fulfilling the law and obeying the demands of Scripture. But, God sent His Son to fulfill what we are incapable of doing! Rorty recognized that man is so filled with rebellious, selfish pride that he cannot act in true humility. It is only through utter and complete daily dependence upon Christ that He can give us the ability to imitate His meekness.

Every other religion and worldview in the world proclaims a gospel of works. What sets Christianity apart is its message of grace—we have received a gift of love and forgiveness that we do not deserve. Because we have been set free from the bondage of the law, we can respond in love. Your student may cite any number of passages that communicate the message of the Gospel of freedom and grace. Romans 8:1-4 is a good example passage, “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.” This passage teaches that Christ did it all—every work we were incapable of perfectly fulfilling. Embracing this Gospel sets men’s souls free to love and free to humbly serve; rejecting this Gospel leads to a futile life rebelliously grasping and striving to reject what one knows to be true.

3. Rorty determined that since he could not fulfill the call to humility, he would reject God altogether. He decided to create a philosophy of life that denied God and instead pursued the selfish desires of man. He said that humanity is oriented toward “its own increased prosperity.” Instead of pursuing humility, Rorty gave himself over to building the obstinate pride of mankind. How is Rorty’s conclusion (and the conclusion of so many other Darwinists) reflective of the actions of men who “suppress the truth by their wickedness” in Romans 1:18-23?

Rorty never says that he rejected Christianity because he was convinced there is no God. On the contrary, the reason he rejected Christianity was that he felt he couldn’t obey God’s demands. As was pointed out in the above question, he tragically did not understand the message of the Gospel. He then resolved to “suppress the truth.” Like a man shoving a spring down into a tiny coil so that it cannot spring up into view, Rorty squeezed the truth out of his mind. Instead of worshiping God and submitting to Him, Rorty resolved to make nature his god. Like so many evolutionists who determine to reject God and profess their own philosophy as wisdom, he became a man with a foolish heart darkened to the truth.

4. Read Romans 2:14-15, and then read the following excerpt from Book I of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*¹ by John Calvin. Pay special attention to what he has to say about those who reject the notions of “sin” and “wrong” (keep in mind that Calvin uses “natural law” and “conscience” interchangeably; also the “rule of life” refers to God’s law).

If the Gentiles have the righteousness of the law naturally engraven on their minds, we certainly cannot say that they are altogether blind as to the rule of life. Nothing, indeed, is more common, than for man to be sufficiently instructed in a right course of conduct by natural law, of which the Apostle here speaks. Let us consider, however, for what end this knowledge of the law was given to men. For from this it will forthwith appear how far it can conduct them in the way of reason and truth. This is even plain from the words of Paul, if we attend to their arrangement. He had said a little before, that those who had sinned in the law will be judged by the law; and those who have sinned without the law will perish without the law. As it might seem unaccountable that the Gentiles should perish without any previous judgment, he immediately subjoins, that conscience served them instead of the law, and was therefore sufficient for their righteous condemnation. The end of the natural law, therefore, is to render man inexcusable, and may be not improperly defined—the judgment of conscience distinguishing sufficiently between just and unjust, and by convicting

¹ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981).

men on their own testimony, depriving them of all pretext for ignorance. So indulgent is man toward himself, that, while doing evil, he always endeavors as much as he can to suppress the idea of sin (...) But since the sinner, when trying to evade the judgment of good and evil implanted in him, is ever and anon dragged forward, and not permitted to wink so effectually as not to be compelled at times, whether he will or not, to open his eyes, it is false to say that he sins only through ignorance.

According to Calvin, what does the passage in Romans 2 say about unbelievers who either deny or simply ignore absolute standards of right and wrong? According to the passage, what purpose does natural law serve?

Romans teaches that unbelievers have no excuse before God. God has placed a conscience in the hearts and minds of men, so that, no matter our “knowledge” of biblical law, we intrinsically know what is right and what is wrong. Science cannot rid man of this conscience. Therefore, no amount of evolutionary teaching or naturalist denial of God and absolute morality will ever excuse men for their sins.

Evolutionists claim that natural law proves man’s autonomy from the rule of a higher being or a moral code. However, according to Calvin the opposite is true, natural law serves the purpose of condemning men, “The end of the natural law, therefore, is to render man inexcusable.”

5. Suppose you work with a non-Christian man named Randy. You talk in the break room, and occasionally you have the opportunity to work on projects together. The subject of science and religion has come up, and you perceive that Randy has been influenced by naturalist philosophy in school, on TV, etc. He is open to discussing other points of view, but he just can’t see the logic in what he calls the “blind faith” of Christianity. “Faith is fine for helping people get through hard times,” he tells you, “but I don’t see what it has to do with the material world. There’s no evidence of God when you look at nature.” You see this as a great opportunity to share the gospel, but before you jump into explaining sin and the cross, you want to address his doubts. Pretend that you are answering Randy’s questions, and use what you have learned in the past chapters to “pre-evangelize” to him. Lead your answer to the ultimate goal of sharing the Gospel.

Students’ answers will vary, but look for a few key components. Did the student use specific scientific proofs learned from the book? Did the student talk about the origin of the universe and proofs for the existence of God? Did your student “prove” these things for the sake of winning the argument, or was the answer heart-felt, leading to the Gospel message?

6. What is the difference between pre-evangelism and evangelism? Explain the difference between apologetics (defending the faith) and evangelism (preaching/sharing the faith). Which should be the ultimate goal of discussions like the one with Randy—pre-evangelism or evangelism? List some verses and explain how they motivate you during discussions like this.

The term “pre-evangelism” is further unpacked in chapter 10. Colson explains how, in today’s world, Christians can no longer take for granted that unbelievers have a proper understanding of basic biblical vocabulary. For instance, before you can talk to an unbeliever about forgiveness for his/her sin, you have to explain the concept of sin.

Evangelism, on the other hand, is actually telling the Gospel message. It is very tempting to think that, because you gave convincing proof for an Intelligent Designer, you evangelized. However, telling someone that, for instance, cells are so complex in their functions that it would be impossible for them to have evolved by chance, is not the same as telling someone that through the gift of faith, Jesus Christ can forgive your sins. Apologetics is NOT the same thing as evangelism. As we stated earlier, it is a means to end, not an end in itself.

In a discussion like the one with Randy, the ultimate goal for the believer should be to share the Gospel. It may take time; it may take many conversations; it may take answering and/or asking many questions. However, the goal should never be to state a few scientific proofs and leave. There is so much more to our faith than the ability to combat science! In fact, the only reason we are able to combat science is because our faith is the truth—the truth that is meant to set men’s souls free.

For the last question, student answers will vary. Your student may choose to cite a passage we discussed earlier or one he/she found in personal study. Look up the passage to make sure that your student understands the passage.

DEFINITIONS

1. **DNA:** the “blueprint,” made up of amino acids, from which an organism is constructed
2. **Information theory:** the field of research that investigates the ways information is transmitted
3. **Low and high information content:** the number of instructions a structure or message requires in order to be constructed
4. **Devolution:** harmful changes in a species that result from genetic engineering
5. **Irreducible complexity:** the term used to describe how the parts of organisms are all necessary to its existence; these parts cannot be mutated, changed or taken away without harming the organism

KEY CONCEPTS

1. Scientific discovery supports that life can be created only by an intelligent agent directing, controlling and manipulating the process.
2. Darwin’s theories are not scientifically demonstrable; in fact, random genetic mutation and evolution both result in devolution, not species improvement.
3. Sinful pride is the underlying motivation in evolutionary theory. Man does not want to admit that there is a God or that this God has control over the universe because that would mean that man is responsible to serve and obey God.
4. Darwinism stems from *religious*, not scientific motives.
5. Christianity hinges on the debate over creation because all of truth stands or falls on whether or not there is a God who created the heavens and the earth.

Lesson 5

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MADE IN HIS IMAGE:

THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

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1. “Life is a MIRACLE , a SACRED gift from God.”
2. “Christians believe that GOD created HUMAN BEINGS in His own IMAGE .”
3. “Since traditional notions of MORALITY and social order are largely derived from CHRISTIANITY , these moral conventions likewise crumble when God is dismissed as irrelevant or NONEXISTENT . The death of God means the death of MORALITY .”
4. “ CHOICE in itself cannot possibly be a VALUE and that value depends on what is chosen.”
5. “The baby in the WOMB , having been reduced to the status of a NONPERSON , is then demonized in pro-choice literature as a hostile AGGRESSOR against the MOTHER , and abortion is dressed up as SELF-DEFENSE .”
6. “Only the JUDEO - CHRISTIAN view of life conforms to REALITY , to the nature and character of the HUMAN condition as we actually experience it.”
7. “What is the CHIEF end of man? To GLORIFY God and ENJOY Him forever.”
8. “The Christian understands that our real HOPE is in the SPIRITUAL realm, so that some things are more important than BIOLOGICAL life.”

SHORT ANSWER

1. A. Define “culture of life.”

The culture of life is a “culture steeped in the Judeo-Christian tradition that human life has intrinsic value because it was made in the image and likeness of God.” Under this way of thinking, all human life deserves dignity and respect regardless of race or physical, mental or emotional state.

B. Explain what it does/does not value.

The culture of life values human dignity and strives to protect it, improve it and cultivate it. Abortion, infanticide and euthanasia are forbidden in this culture.

2. A. Define “culture of death.”

A culture of death, on the other hand, “denies that the human species is superior to all other biological species,” and thus is not subject to any more protection or respect than that afforded to an animal.

B. Explain what it does/does not value.

In this culture, since human life has no intrinsic value, abortion, infanticide and euthanasia are permitted and even encouraged.

3. A. What is eugenics?

Eugenics is the attempt to improve the human race through selective breeding.

B. How is eugenics a consequence of an evolutionary worldview?

Evolution claims that species are naturally selected when only the fittest and strongest survive. Eugenics is an attempt to rid the world of weak “unfit” humans and to create a perfect human race of tough, fit and intelligent people.

4. Colson explains that “the most sacred goal of American life” is personal happiness. In chapter 13 he tells a sad story of what he and his wife have observed from their home.

A. What do they notice about the new couples moving into their Floridian neighborhood?

Colson and his wife have noticed more and more couples moving to their neighborhood for retirement. These couples are well-to-do businessmen who hope to spend their retirement relaxing and playing golf. However, “no worries, no work, and golf every day,” turns into a meaningless life for them.

B. How does this reflect the hopelessness of a life of “freedom” with no purpose?

These retirees are “free” to do whatever they want. They can sleep in, travel, golf in the afternoon, take tea on the veranda or watch television to their heart’s content. At first, they imagine that spending every waking moment relaxing and pampering themselves will be just what they deserve after so many years of hard work. But there is no end to the monotony of parties and golf-outings. Without a purpose, without direction, without a God with whom they can commune, life becomes empty and dull. They are nearing the end of their lives, but there is no ultimate purpose to their existence.

5. If men were not created to pursue selfish desires, what were they created for?

Colson observes how vainly pursuing selfish desires only brings sadness and meaninglessness because men were not created to live for their own pleasure; they were created to commune with God. As we learned, the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* teaches “the chief end of man” is “to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.”

6. In our society, what has been the consequence of the belief that the body and soul have no effect upon each other?

To create a dualism between the body and the soul is to render the body merely a tool for gratifying and satisfying oneself. If the body and the soul are not connected, the body has no intrinsic meaning; it becomes a disposable good. If another’s comfort and happiness depend upon discomfort to your body, then you are justified in refusing aid to another. For instance, pregnant mothers who don’t want their bodies “invaded” with a baby may abort their children. Diseased individuals who would rather die may commit suicide. Family members who don’t want to be bothered by caring for their elderly relatives may use euthanasia as a way out.

This idea has also led to justifications for experimenting with unborn children for the sake of scientific discovery, swapping sperm and eggs with other people for the sake of creating “the perfect child,” granting children to gay and lesbian couples and experimenting with genetic engineering and cloning.

ESSAY

1. Read the following excerpt written by René Descartes, the seventeenth-century mathematician, who Colson believes was the first thinker to reduce God to a position of irrelevance. This selection, in which he explains the first two principles of his philosophy, is taken from his *Discourse on Method*:

I then desired to devote myself exclusively to the search for the truth...and that I reject as absolutely false everything in which I could imagine the least doubt, in order to see whether, after this process, something in my beliefs remained that was entirely indubitable. Thus, because our senses sometimes deceive us, I wanted to suppose that nothing was exactly as they led us to imagine. And because there are men who make mistakes in reasoning, even in the simplest matters in geometry...I rejected as false all the reasonings that I had previously taken for demonstrations. And finally, considering the fact that all the same thoughts we have when we are awake can also come to us when we are asleep, without any of them being true, I resolved to pretend that all the things that had ever entered my mind were no more true than the illusions of my dreams. But immediately afterward I noticed that, while I wanted thus to think that everything was false, it necessarily had to be the case that I, who was thinking this, was something. And noticing that this truth—I think, therefore I am—was so firm and so assured that all the most extravagant suppositions of the skeptics were incapable of shaking it, I judged that I could accept it without scruple as the first principle of the philosophy I was seeking.

Following this, reflecting upon the fact that I doubted and that, as a consequence, my being was not utterly perfect (for I saw clearly that it is a greater perfection to know than to doubt), I decided to search for the source from which I had learned to think of something more perfect than I was, and I plainly knew that this had to be from some nature that was in fact more perfect. As to those thoughts I had of many other things outside me, such as the heavens, the earth, light, heat, and a thousand others, I had no trouble at all knowing where they came from, because, noticing nothing in them that seemed to me to make them superior to me, I could believe that, if they were true, they were dependencies of my nature, insofar as it had some perfection, and that, if they were not true, I obtained them from nothing, that is to say, they were in me because I had some defect. But the same could not hold for the idea of a being more perfect than my own, for it is a manifest contradiction to receive this idea from nothing, and because it is no less a contradiction that something

more perfect should follow from and depend upon something less perfect than that something should come from nothing, I could not obtain it from myself. It thus remained that this idea had been placed in me by a nature truly more perfect than I was and that it even had within itself all the perfections of which I could have any idea, that is to say, to explain myself in a single word, that it was God.¹

A. How did Descartes discover his “first principle” of philosophy?

Descartes began by doubting everything he was ever taught or ever heard. He doubted God, he doubted life, religion, language and ethics. Eventually he came to the conclusion that the only thing he knew for sure was that he could doubt. But doubting meant that his brain had to be functioning, that he was thinking. Furthermore, if he was thinking, he must exist. Thus, he proclaimed his first principle of philosophy, “I think therefore I am.”

B. How did he get from this first principle to the statement, “this idea had been placed in me by a nature truly more perfect than I was... it was God”?

Then he began to wonder the origin of his thinking. He figured that doubt must prove imperfection because knowing is better than doubting. He then concluded that if he is imperfect, there must be something which is perfect. His conclusion: there must a God who represents perfection.

C. If Descartes believed that there is a God, then how can he have influenced the beginning of naturalism (which denies a God)?

The last part of this answer may be difficult for your student. If his/her answer isn't fully explained, try to help your student along with your comments. While Descartes believed that there must be a God or a perfect transcendent being, he didn't define who or what that being was. His conclusion was so vague that it was easy for later thinkers to decide that ultimate truth is nature and therefore nature is god. Descartes' whole logic began with the assertion, “I think; therefore I am.” His foundational philosophy started with man destroying the need for God. Even though he concluded that there must be a God, he paved the way for philosophies (like naturalism) that originate with nothing more than the scientific, rational mind.

2. Many biblical passages draw attention to the distinction between the body and the soul. However, this is different than creating a *dichotomy* between the body and the soul. Read Matthew 10:28; Mark 14:38 and 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. Many Christians have interpreted the first two passages to mean that the body is evil or unimportant while the spirit is good. This mindset has led Christians to either mistreat their bodies or to deny that what they do with their bodies has an effect upon their souls.

¹ Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998).

Use Scripture to interpret Scripture, and explain how the teaching of these passages differs from the “radical dualism” of body and soul mentioned in chapter 12.

The passage in Matthew reminds readers to not be afraid of those who kill the body but who can't kill the soul. It seems to imply that the body and soul are distinctly separate. Similarly, the passage in Mark advises that the spirit is willing to withstand temptation, but sometimes the body doesn't help in the battle against sin, for it is weak. However, the passage from 1 Corinthians talks about the rationale for abstaining from sexual immorality. Why should Christians not “unite their bodies with a prostitute”? Because their bodies belong to God, and they are to be used for His glory.

Our physical bodies have eternal significance because we can either use our bodies to further the Kingdom or to dishonor the temple of the Lord. It is true that the flesh is weak. In fact, from the day a man is born, his body begins to decay. Bodies need sleep, food, exercise and protection from the elements. In Gethsemane, Jesus wanted his disciples to stay awake that they might pray with Him, and this would require mastering their bodily needs. That is why Jesus reminds His disciples to not give in to the needs of their weak bodies at such a crucial time. However, nowhere does Scripture command Christians to mistreat their bodies for the sake of spiritual gain or to do whatever they wish with their bodies because “only the spirit matters.” Sins of the body affect the soul, and trouble in the soul affects the body. In the same way, using our bodies for good works refreshes our souls, and joy in the soul revives the body. The two are not dichotomous, they are intimately connected.

3. In the early nineteenth century, John Stuart Mill wrote his thoughts on the autonomy of man in his book *On Liberty*. Here, he explains his position on a democratic government:

The only part of the conduct of anyone for which he is amenable to society is that which concerns others. In the part which merely concerns himself, his independence is, of right, absolute. Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign.

The only freedom which deserves the name is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs or impede their efforts to obtain it. Each is the proper guardian of his own health, whether bodily or mental and spiritual. Mankind are greater gainers by suffering each to live as seems good to themselves than by compelling each to live as seems good to the rest.²

- A. Note the sentence in the first paragraph, “Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign.” How does Eileen McDonagh on page 123 of *How Now Shall We Live?* prove that this statement is impossible to live out without harming others?

McDonagh speaks of the fetus as an assailant. She claims that it “expropriates” the mother’s “liberty.” To her, this rationalizes abortion. Her logic is “a baby in-utero impedes my freedom; therefore I may kill it to protect my own health, happiness and freedom.” McDonagh is right that carrying a pregnancy to term infringes upon the freedom of the mother. That is because God created motherhood to be synonymous with sacrifice. At times, it may even negatively affect her health. However, abortion ignores the right of the child to live a happy, healthy life.

² John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978).

- B. How do the words of Mill and McDonagh support Colson's statement, "...any society in which citizens care only for themselves cannot long endure"?

It is impossible for each individual to be the sovereign of his/her own body and mind. We all live in society together; we grow up in families where all the members are mutually dependent upon each other. If every person simply pursues his/her own health and happiness, then people will only harm each other in their selfish pursuits. McDonagh proves that it is impossible for a thriving society to function off of the assumption that each individual pursues his/her own desires because there are some members of society who are dependent. Some persons cannot pursue their own health and happiness because they are infants, elderly or disabled. Who will protect their rights and their comfort?

When an entire society of people selfishly cast aside the needs of others, that society will only tear itself apart; it will not long survive. We can already observe this happening with the legalization of abortion and, in some places, euthanasia and infanticide. But, when God created the earth, this was not the way He intended the world to function. He made men and women to care for each other and sacrifice for each other. This is the only way that a society can thrive.

4. Read the following selection spoken by Dr. Jack Kevorkian. Dr. Kevorkian was infamous for his role in many physician-assisted suicides, and this passage describes his personal beliefs concerning his practice.

The question of ethics always comes up. I mean, what are ethics? You ask someone to define ethics, you're going to get various definitions. I have a simple one: Ethics is doing and saying what's right at the time. That's what people forget. So you have eternal ethics based on some mythology you invent, you're going to have crises if you think that's eternal as society changes.

And they don't mean anything when you read them, because, according to the philosophy dominating our secular legislative activity, there's an eternal ethics that dictate... what our laws will say. Despite television, superhighways, medical advances, miracles of space, we have eternal ethics. That's the problem.

I'm not against religion. I'm basically an agnostic. What you have is fine. But when you foist that on me as a law, then I object... stridently.

And the body's sacred. I never studied sanctity in a medical school. Sanctity is an invention of the human mind. Define "sanctity." I'll bet you don't get any kind of consensus in this audience. What is sanctity? Divinity, holiness, the whole body's sacred?

Yeah. People end it there. But a child will ask, "Really? Is a fingernail sacred?" And then you're stumped!

When I take the gallbladder out of a body... is that gallbladder sacred? Better yet: when I take a baboon's heart and put it into a human, does that heart become sacred? Or do you have a sacred body with a profane heart? As if that makes any sense.

So if you carry this mythologic borborygmus to its extreme, it becomes absurd. Even a child would know that.

These questions I'm asking, does that baboon heart become sacred? You can't answer it. Why not? You know what sanctity is, don't you? Can the body be partly sacred? Is the fecal material in your intestines sacred?

You're a human body, you're a biological organism like every other biological organism. You bleed when you cut, and when you die, you stink. Now, what's sacred about that?

These are things people don't think about, and it's easy to criticize because your thinking stops at a certain point because your mind has been limited by the mythology inculcated into you as you grow up. If you tried

to exercise the limits of your mind in an honest fashion, you wouldn't get very far. You'd lose your job. You wouldn't get elected.

Absolute personal autonomy. I'm an absolute autonomist. Do and say whatever you want to do and say at any time you want to do or say it, as long as you do not harm or threaten anybody else's person or property.³

- A. In his soliloquy, Kevorkian explains his disgust with two aspects of Christianity: the belief in "eternal ethics," and the belief in the sanctity of human life. First, refute his position on ethics. How do you know that eternal ethics are necessary for a consistent worldview that brings purpose and meaning to life? **Use Proverbs 14:12 in your answer.**

Without eternal ethics, there is no absolute truth, no moral standard. Who determines what is right and wrong? Dr. Kevorkian claims that ethics is, "doing and saying what is right at the time." However, what seems right to one person may not seem right to another. Furthermore, what seems right to a person may in fact be wickedness! Proverbs 14:12 states, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." Kevorkian's actions perfectly illustrate this point. The result of euthanasia isn't quality of life and dignity for all—the result is death.

- B. Second, refute his position on the sanctity of human life. Why does a Christian believe that life is sacred? **Use Genesis 9:6 and Psalm 139:13 in your answer.**

Kevorkian argues that bodies cannot be sacred because they are nothing more than functioning organisms. To him, there is nothing different about a human, a baboon or any other biological organism. But what he doesn't understand is that humans aren't sacred simply because they have hearts and livers and fingernails. The point of the sanctity of human life isn't that a colon is sacred or that a toe is sacred, but that a person is sacred because he/she was uniquely created to bear the image of God. The body is sacred because God knits each and every human being together in the mother's womb (Psalm 139:13). One cannot destroy a life because God made that life! Furthermore, life is sacred because humans have souls; we were made to bear the image of God. Only humans have a moral compass, a conscience, a spirit that can commune with God. In Genesis 9, God institutes capital punishment because he says that there must be a serious punishment for taking human life. Why? Because humans, unlike any other living thing on the planet, can bear the image of the almighty God.

5. Mother Teresa, a twentieth-century Roman Catholic nun remembered for her work among the poor in India, offers the following insight on the effects of abortion.

But I feel that the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion, because it is a war against the child, a direct killing of the innocent child, murder by the mother herself. And if we accept that a mother can kill even her own child, how can we tell other people not to kill one another? How do we persuade a woman not to have an abortion? As always, we must persuade her with love and we remind ourselves that love means willing to give until it hurts. Jesus gave even His life to love us. So, the mother who is thinking of abortion, should be helped to love, that is, to give until it hurts her plans, or her free time, to respect the life of her child. The father of that child, whoever he is, must also give until it hurts.

³ Jack Kevorkian, *Speech at the National Press Club Luncheon* (National Press Club, Washington D.C., July 29, 1996) <http://www.kevorkian.org/npc.htm> (accessed September 21, 2005; site now discontinued).

By abortion, the mother does not learn to love, but kills even her own child to solve her problems. And, by abortion, the father is told that he does not have to take any responsibility at all for the child he has brought into the world. That father is likely to put other women into the same trouble. So abortion just leads to more abortion. Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching its people to love, but to use violence to get what they want. This is why the greatest destroyer of love and peace is abortion.⁴

- A. Explain the reasons why Mother Teresa believes that abortion is the greatest destroyer of peace today.

Mother Teresa believes that abortion is the greatest destroyer of peace today because it is murder of a child. The mother—the very person who should be the primary protector and nurturer of the child—becomes the murderer. In this way, the mother never learns to love, but only learns that she may kill to pursue her own desires. Mother Teresa points out that if a mother is allowed to kill her own child, then how can society call any murder a crime? The father also does not learn to love. Worse than abandoning his child, he learns that he can kill his child to escape fatherhood. She closes with the statement, “Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching its people to love, but to use violence to get what they want.” Under that kind of worldview there can be no peace because people are “us(ing) violence to get what they want.”

- B. She also points out that the best way to persuade a woman not to have an abortion is through love. The mother must learn to sacrifice. How does this match with Colson’s statement that Christianity is the only worldview that “provides the most certain motive for service and care of others”?

The opposite of using violence to serve self is using love to serve someone else’s needs. This is why Mother Teresa believes that a mother considering abortion should be taught how to love and sacrifice for her child. Without Christ, there is no certain motive for that kind of love. Without the Gospel as the foundation for worldview, there is no clear reason to give to others rather than take from them. The naturalist worldview says, “There is no God and no absolute truth. You came into being by chance and through natural processes; you will die by natural processes. The only way that you can survive is if you watch out for yourself. No one keeps you accountable, and ultimately no one cares.” Under that worldview, abortion makes complete sense. Pursue your own desires, and if anything stands in your way, get rid of it! On the other hand, the Christian worldview says, “Christ sacrificed for you, an unworthy sinner. He forgave you, loved you and gave Himself up for you. What other response can there be but to do the same for others?”

⁴ Mother Teresa, quote used in Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time, University of Notre Dame, http://campusministry.nd.edu/archive/29th_Sunday_Homily.shtml (accessed September 21, 2005; site now discontinued).

6. With abortion, there are more victims than the unborn baby. After having an abortion, many mothers suffer from severe depression and guilt. It may be hard for them to show love to their children. If they were coerced into having the abortion by their partner, it may be hard for them to trust men again. They may be haunted by memories or medical problems. Fathers also suffer. They also may experience severe depression and guilt. They may feel disconnected from their other children, and they may feel deep shame. Suppose you know a Christian mother or father who aborted his/her child in the past. How could you comfort this brother or sister with the Word of God?

For many students this may be a very personal question. Some may have aborted a child or several children. Some may have coerced a friend, girlfriend or a wife to have an abortion. Some may have grandchildren who were aborted. Others may have friends whose lives have been hurt through abortion. Whatever the case, be sensitive in your response and remind your student of the deep love of God, who forgives and forgets any and *every* sin of a penitent believer. Here are some Scripture passages that may be helpful to share with your student: Psalm 103:12; Romans 8:39; 1 John 1:9; Luke 7:36-50.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Sanctity of life:** the idea that human life itself is sacred, that is, worthy to be preserved and protected
2. **Euthanasia:** the killing of a suffering individual, generally by lethal injection; also known as “assisted suicide;” currently legal only in the state of Oregon
3. **Abortion:** the killing of a baby while still in the mother’s womb; legal across the country
4. **Infanticide:** the killing of an infant after it is born; currently illegal in the U.S.

KEY CONCEPTS

1. As a gift from God, all human life is sacred. Because humans are created capable of bearing the image of God, all human life is precious and should be protected regardless of physical, mental or emotional state.
2. God has given us stewardship over many things, but not personal autonomy. Men are not islands, and all are dependent upon God and each other. Society will implode if each individual cares only for him/herself. On the other hand, society will thrive if individuals care for and protect each other.
3. Naturalism cannot provide society with the necessary framework for a fruitful, dignified society. If humans are nothing more than the product of impersonal, natural evolution, then human life has no intrinsic worth. Only the Christian worldview gives purpose, meaning and *worth* to human life.

Lesson 6

Name _____

ID# _____

HOUSING _____

INSTITUTION _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

HEAVEN ON EARTH?

THE LIE OF UTOPIANISM

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

1. “The doctrine of original SIN is the only philosophy empirically VALIDATED by thirty-five centuries of recorded HUMAN HISTORY.”
2. “The denial of our sinful nature, and the UTOPIAN myth it breeds, leads not to beneficial SOCIAL experiments but to TYRANNY.”
3. “For when we CLOSE our eyes to the human capacity for EVIL, we fail to build the MORAL boundaries needed to PROTECT us from that evil.”
4. “Whereas traditional social THEORY justified any given action by an appeal to the PAST—to the normative HUMAN nature created by GOD—modern revolutionaries justify their actions by an appeal to the future—to the IDEAL society they will create.”
5. “The TROUBLE with the technocratic vision is that it reduces INDIVIDUALS to passive recipients of the state’s MINISTRATIONS, thus robbing them of LIBERTY and initiative.”

SHORT ANSWER

1. What is the myth of utopianism? Use Jeremiah 17:9 in your answer.

Utopianism is the belief that human nature is basically good—that people are not evil in their hearts. Instead, social structures, environment, society or bureaucracy are evil, but deep down inside all people are good. Furthermore, if humanity can be free from restrictions, traditions, pre-conceptions and societal restraints, then a perfect world can emerge. This belief is a dangerous lie, as we can see from the story of Synanon. People are by nature evil; setting them free from moral constraints will only result in unleashing man’s sinfulness. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” Our hearts are so hopelessly wicked that we cannot even understand the depth of our own sinfulness. Utopianism promises a safe, free, happy world, but it only results in ruined lives because the issue of man’s sinfulness is never addressed.

2. A. What is the “noetic” effect of sin?

Sin affects even our minds; this is called the noetic effect of sin.

B. How is it related to total depravity?

Even our intellects are stained by sin, blinded by its deceitful power. Total depravity teaches that *all* of us—every part of us—is tainted by sin. From the heart, to the emotions, to the imagination, to the thoughts and intellect—humans are thoroughly and totally sinful.

3. A. From chapter 18, list two American government programs that were rooted in the belief that there is no original sin.

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1. | (1) President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s “New Deal” programs |
| | (2) President Lyndon B. Johnson’s “Great Society” |
| 2. | (3) Public housing |
| | (4) Welfare programs |
| | (5) President Richard M. Nixon’s excessively harsh criminal sentences |

B. What was the result of these programs?

None of these grand schemes have produced the desired result: a world “fit for human habitation.” Instead, their failure has proved the opposite—that no amount of social engineering can eliminate poverty, crime or any other social ills.

4. How have many “scientific utopian” initiatives of the American government encouraged an “entitlement mentality” among American citizens?

With programs like housing projects and welfare, people begin to feel like they deserve hand-outs from the government. Since the individuals benefiting from these programs put no effort into the success of the programs, they feel no sense of responsibility when the programs fail. Instead of encouraging work ethic and personal responsibility, these programs encourage laziness. When the programs fail, people blame the government and expect to be given another hand-out. They begin to feel entitled to free housing, checks in the mail, etc. because they have not been taught “moral responsibility, economic initiative, and personal prudence.”

5. A. Explain the traditional conservative approach to crime reduction.

Without recognizing man’s moral responsibility, conservatives have traditionally reduced humans to animals who respond to incentives. If the punishment looks bad enough, then people will obey the law.

B. How does the traditional conservative view exhibit a false view of human nature?

According to traditional conservatives the answer to evil is not to address the hearts of people but to make punishments harsher. This approach has not worked because it has not addressed the “heart of the matter.”

6. A. Explain the traditional liberal approach to crime reduction.
The traditional liberal approach also ignored the nature of mankind. Instead of blaming men for their actions, liberals blame societal structures.
- B. How does the traditional liberal view exhibit a false view of human nature?
According to traditional liberals, the answer to evil is to fix the environment, not fix the heart. This approach has not worked because it also has not addressed the “heart of the matter.”
7. Read Genesis chapter 3.
- A. How did Satan tempt Eve to sin?
Satan tempted Eve by questioning God’s authority.
- B. What did Satan tell her to make her desire the fruit?
Satan offered alternative consequences. “You won’t die,” he told them. “In fact, you will be just like God.” Eve was enchanted by the idea of being like God; she thought that she could be her own god. But Eve didn’t become like God; she was cursed, as was all of humanity.
- C. What effect did the Fall have upon Adam and Eve’s relationship?
There was shame and blame between the man and wife. Their union and communion was ruined by pride and competition; their beautiful love was stained by self-conscious shame and a lack of trust.
- D. What was the result in the relationship of Adam and Eve to God?
Instead of intimacy and openness, Adam and Eve were also distanced from God and banished from the peaceful dwelling of the garden.
- E. What was the effect for Eve and Adam as individuals?
Eve—For Eve, childbearing became a curse of pain and danger. She would always struggle to overcome her husband’s authority, and he would always rule over her.
Adam—For Adam, his livelihood became toil. The ground was cursed, and he was sentenced to eat by the sweat of his brow.
8. Write 1 or 2 quotes from Charles Dederich’s comments to Meg and Jack during their first meeting, which show that he held to an Enlightenment worldview.
Dederich first set Jack at ease by telling him, “We’re all messed up because of the society we’ve been raised in.” Right away, Dederich betrayed that he believed the problem with the world was not in the heart of man, but in societal structures. This is the same position that Rousseau taught—set people free from societal constraints, and righteousness and peace will reign.

ESSAY

1. What is “the politics of redemption”? Contrast the “politics of redemption” with the redemption of the Bible.

According to Colson, this is the idea that “politics can be the means not only of creating a better world, but also of actually transforming human nature.” This idea was begun by French philosopher Rousseau, who believed that people can be free and pure if freed from the constraints of society. He concluded that men can be liberated from society by the state. The state can tear down the evil institutions of society, and as people become totally dependent upon the state, they will be free, “redeemed” by politics.

The problem with redemption through politics is that people with sinful natures are the ones running politics! How can the state redeem humanity if the state is run by people with wicked hearts, personal agendas, misguided thoughts and selfish intentions? On the other hand, the biblical worldview explains that human nature is sinful. The only way to redeem people is to cleanse them from sin. This is done through Christ’s work on the cross. Jesus lived a life without sin, very God and very man. He took on the sins of His children, paying the penalty for our transgressions. Through reliance upon Him, people can be redeemed. He has no evil intentions, no selfish thoughts and no hidden agendas because He is God. He is without spot or blemish, totally pure. He doesn’t liberate people from society, He liberates people from their own sinful hearts, purifying from the inside out.

2. Read the following excerpt from Karl Marx’s *Communist Manifesto*, and then answer the questions that follow.

When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so called, is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organize itself as a class; if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class.

In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.¹

- A. Communist and socialist ideals have influenced hundreds of countries around the world, and the governments of some countries such as Russia, North Korea, China and Cuba whole-heartedly embraced Marx’s ideology.

How are Marx’s ideas utopian (especially pay attention to the last sentence of the selection)?

¹ Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, <http://www.indepthinfo.com/communist-manifesto/manifest.txt> (accessed October 10, 2005).

Marx believed that if people could overthrow the existing government and all existing institutions of society, then a new society could emerge. This new society would be built upon the ideals of absolute equality for all. Thus he says, "...we shall have an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." There would be no more social classes, no more competition for raises and better homes and nicer clothes. Everyone would look alike, think alike, talk and walk alike and live alike. His conclusion: this state of equality would be a perfect world.

B. What does he fail to recognize about human nature?

He failed to account for sin. There is no possible way to set up a perfect society because the people making up a society are not perfect.

C. What has been the result of communism in every country that has embraced it?

Marx believed in overthrowing government and beginning a new state, but that much power in the hands of a few men has always resulted in a totalitarian regime. Communist countries have been reigned by terror and often bloodshed. Their governments have imploded, their economies have crumbled, and their citizens are depressed and oppressed. In these countries, the motivation for good work ethic, clean homes, better products and quality workmanship have disappeared because no matter what people do (or don't do), they are rewarded the same.

3. Chapter 15 alludes to a book by Rabbi Kushner entitled, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*. Based upon Romans 3 and Isaiah 53:6, explain if "bad things" really do happen to "good people." What doctrine mentioned on the last page of chapter 17 helps to answer this question?

Romans teaches that there is "no one righteous; not even one," and Isaiah says that "we all, like sheep, have gone astray." There really are no "good people." Contrary to what the movies may teach us, there aren't "good guys" and "bad guys." We are all guilty, all sinful and all deserving of the punishment of God. The term Colson uses at the end of chapter 17 to describe man's sinfulness is "total depravity." This teaching says that all people are tainted by sin in every part of their beings—from their minds, to their hearts, to their bodies. In the light of God's holiness, we all fall short of His glory. And when we see our own sinfulness, we realize that a better question would be, "Why do good things happen to bad people?"

4. A. Does belief in man's sinful nature result in pessimism? Does the biblical belief in total depravity leave people without hope?

Rather than resulting in pessimism, the doctrine of total depravity is the first step to realizing the wonder of redemption through Christ. For, without it, what need has man for a Savior? Without an understanding of man's sinful nature, the world becomes a frustrating and confusing place. Why do all cultures eventually crumble? Why doesn't utopian society work? Why do people hurt each other? Why does every attempt of the government to "fix society" end in failure? Unless one understands man's sinful nature, these questions cannot be answered. Man will keep striving and ultimately failing because all he can do is fix the physical, when the real problem lies in the heart.

- B. Using Romans 3, explain the role of the doctrine of total depravity in the message of the Gospel.

Romans chapter 3 clearly leaves no man with an excuse for his sin or a plea for his own righteousness. Yet, the Bible does not end the story there. Imagine a world where people were sinful and there was no Gospel. That would be a world without hope! But God, in His rich mercy, has given salvation to those who believe. Romans 3:22 says, "This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe." Belief in total depravity actually sets people free from a Gospel of works. If man was not totally sinful in his nature, then he would be required to strive—all his life long—to try to live up to the standard of God's holiness. How exhausting that would be! On our own, we are completely incapable of reaching the holiness of God, so He has done the work for us. Through the gift of faith, we can enter Paradise on the work and merit of another—Christ, God's own Son.

5. A. How did Dederich react when members of his community began to squirm under the restrictions? How did his reaction make the members of Synanon feel?

At first, Synanon seemed like an honest and free place where people could be relieved of addictions and pressures from society. However, as time went on, Dederich began to make more and more rules and restrictions. Eventually there was no privacy from his voice and no area of people's lives that was free from his law. The people began to feel afraid, oppressed and held captive. He even threatened violence to those who would leave.

- B. Contrast the reaction of Dederich with the redemptive plan of God. When people could not keep God’s Moral Law, what did He do? Use 1 John 4:18 in your answer.

In contrast, God’s law, given in the Ten Commandments, is a law of freedom because His law is based on truth and holiness. Unlike Dederich’s rules, God’s law does not tyrannically lord over us. However, people are not able to keep God’s laws. So, God brought His Son into the world to save men from the bondage of sin. 1 John 4:18 says, “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.” Dederich’s rule was a rule of terror; his laws didn’t set people free but bound them in fear. On the other hand, God’s law is a law of perfect love. Since we cannot keep this law, He gives us perfect love through Christ.

6. The following are speeches and codes concerning policies that have been presented to the 20th century American public. After reading each selection, write the letter of the corresponding policy to the left of the selection.

- A. “The War on Crime”
- B. “The War on Poverty”
- C. Slum clearance and public housing

1. **B** Because it is right, because it is wise, and because, for the first time in our history, it is possible to conquer poverty, I submit, for the consideration of the Congress and the country, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. The Act does not merely expand old programs or improve what is already being done. It charts a new course. It strikes at the causes, not just the consequences of poverty. It can be a milestone in our one-hundred-eighty-year search for a better life for our people... This program will show the way to new opportunities for millions of our fellow citizens. It will provide a lever with which we can begin to open the door to our prosperity for those who have been kept outside. It will also give us the chance to test our weapons, to try our energy and ideas and imagination for the many battles yet to come. As conditions change, and as experience illuminates our difficulties, we will be prepared to modify our strategy. And this program is much more than a beginning. Rather it is a commitment. It is a total commitment by this President, and this Congress, and this nation, to pursue victory over the most ancient of mankind’s enemies.²

Explain: Using a quote from the selection, explain how the selection displays a utopian worldview.

Your student may choose a different quote than what is cited in the answer key. Make sure that he/she properly uses the quote to support his/her answer.

This selection shows that the speaker believes the cause of evil is poverty. The logic of this selection says, “If you can destroy poverty, you can make people experience a better life.” The problem is that the speaker doesn’t factor in sin. The president calls poverty, “the most ancient of mankind’s enemies.” But destroying poverty will not mean safety, peace, love and equality for all, because as long as people have evil hearts, people will be oppressed, the world will be unjust and the “poor you will always have among you” (John 12:8). The real enemy is sin.

² Lyndon B. Johnson, “Proposal for A Nationwide War On The Sources of Poverty” (Speech, United States Congress, Washington D.C., March 16, 1964) <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1964johnson-warpoverty.html> (accessed October 10, 2005).

2. **C** For example, many millions of Americans still live in habitations which not only fail to provide the physical benefits of modern civilization but breed disease and impair the health of future generations. The menace exists not only in the slum areas of the very large cities, but in many smaller cities as well. It exists on tens of thousands of farms, in varying degrees, in every part of the country.³

The Congress declares that the general welfare and security of the Nation and the health and living standards of its people require housing production and related community development sufficient to remedy the serious housing shortage, the elimination of substandard and other inadequate housing through the clearance of slums and blighted areas, and the realization as soon as feasible of the goal of a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family, thus contributing to the development and redevelopment of communities and to the advancement of the growth, wealth, and security of the Nation.⁴

Explain: Using a quote from the selection, explain how the selection displays a utopian worldview.

Your student may choose a different quote than what is cited in the answer key. Make sure that he/she properly uses the quote to support his/her answer.

President Roosevelt speaks of poor habitation as “the menace” to society. Through his legislation, he believes that eliminating “inadequate housing” will result in the “redevelopment of communities” and the “advancement of the growth, wealth, and security of the Nation.” In other words, if everyone had a nice home, we would have a more prosperous nation. Certainly the president is right that slums are not good places to live. In fact, it is good for people to revitalize slum areas and encourage better living standards. But a Christian recognizes that changing housing standards doesn’t get to the root of the problem within people—sinful hearts.

3. **A** We have slowed the rate in the increase in crime...All over this country, we have a new attitude with regard to law enforcement and respect for law, and we are going to continue that kind of an attitude in America... We have laid bills before the Congress, and if you really want action, ask the Congress to act on our bills, asking for stronger control of narcotics. Ask the Congress to act on our bills for control of obscenity. Ask the Congress to act on our bills for organized crime. If Congress will give us the tools, we will control crime. That is what you want and that is what we are going to give you, so give us that chance.⁵

Explain: Using a quote from the selection, explain how the selection displays a utopian worldview.

Your student may choose a different quote than what is cited in the answer key. Make sure that he/she properly uses the quote to support his/her answer.

In this selection, the president believes that, “If Congress will give us the tools, we will control crime.” However, one cannot “control crime” with congressional bills. Certainly fair laws, strict policies and clear punishments will help to reduce crime. People are more likely to obey in their outward actions if there are consistent punishments for breaking the law. However, ultimately no one can control crime because it starts in the heart. Human beings are not like animals who merely respond to stimuli, punishments and rewards. They are morally responsible beings with sinful natures.

³ Franklin D. Roosevelt, “State of the Union 1937” (Speech, United States Congress, Washington D.C., January 6, 1937) <http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/P/fr32/speeches/su37fdr.htm> (accessed October 10, 2005).

⁴ The Public Health and Welfare, Public Law 42, Chapter 8A, Subchapter 1, Security 1441, U.S. Code http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/42/usc_sec_42_00001441----00-.html (accessed October 10, 2005).

⁵ Richard Nixon, (remarks to the 15th Biennial Convention of the National Federation of Republican Women, White House, Washington D.C., September 26, 1969) http://www.nixonlibrary.org/iindex.php?src=gendocs&link=papers_1969 (accessed October 10, 2005).

7. Read the following selection written by reformation theologian John Calvin. Then respond to the questions that follow.

Man is both the image of God and our flesh. Wherefore, if we would not violate the image of God, we must hold the person of man sacred—if we would not divest ourselves of humanity, we must cherish our own flesh. The Lord has been pleased to direct our attention to these two natural considerations as inducements to watch over our neighbour’s preservation—viz. to revere the divine image impressed upon him, and embrace our own flesh. To be clear of the crime of murder, it is not enough to refrain from shedding man’s blood. If in act you perpetrate, if in endeavor you plot, if in wish and design you conceive what is adverse to another’s safety, you have the guilt of murder. On the other hand, if you do not according to your means and opportunity study to defend his safety, by that inhumanity you violate the law.⁶

- A. How is man “both the image of God and our flesh”?

Unlike any other earthly creature, man has both spiritual and physical characteristics. To say that man is created in God’s image does not mean that God must have literal hands and feet and a stomach. Instead, man is created with a soul; he is created capable of communing with God and bearing the holy attributes of God such as righteousness, holiness and love. Man is also a creature of flesh with fleshly vulnerability and hunger and pain and sickness. Thus, man is simultaneously a spiritual and an earthly being.

- B. Why does Calvin say that we should “cherish our own flesh”?

Humans are to honor and protect each other. We take care of our own bodies by eating healthy and exercising and avoiding danger. In this way, we cherish our own flesh. We also seek the good of our neighbor, protecting his/her fleshly life. Scripture commands us not to murder our neighbor, because man is created in God’s image.

- C. Why is it not enough to refrain from “shedding (another) man’s blood”?

We must respect, preserve and honor our neighbors. However, it is not enough to avoid murdering your neighbor; you must also actively seek his/her good. Jesus taught that people can murder their neighbors in their hearts by thinking evil thoughts of them. So, because man is both fleshly and spiritual, made in God’s image and the image of our flesh, we protect our neighbor, from physical harm and treat him/her with dignity and kindness.

⁶ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981).

DEFINITIONS

1. **Utopia:** an imaginary society that is socially, politically and morally perfect
2. **Sinful nature:** the biblical doctrine that mankind is inherently sinful, that is, tends to choose evil instead of good; only divine intervention can change this evil bent of man's heart
3. **Total depravity:** the biblical doctrine that man is depraved in every part of his being; there is no part of man (intellect, body, morals, personality) that is not tainted by sin
4. **Noetic effect of the Fall:** the belief that, when man fell through Adam in the garden, every part of humankind was affected—including their intellect; even the thoughts and ideas of men and women are tainted by sin.

KEY CONCEPTS

1. Mankind is by nature sinful; his heart is thoroughly wicked and bound by sinful inclinations. This doctrine, called total depravity, means that when men and women are given a choice, their natural propensity is to do that which is sinful.
2. Because of man's sinful nature, we can never hope to fashion a perfect society with laws or ideals or programs or isolation. The problem with societies is found not in societal structures, poverty or social classes. These are all just symptoms of a sickness that lies in the hearts of men. The only hope for a world bathed in sin is Christ's sacrifice and God's grace. The Gospel redeems because it changes the hearts of men.
3. Societies built upon utopian ideals often end in despotism and oppression. Communism and socialism as well as various revolutions and cults are built upon the idea that societal structures are evil. If people could overthrow the government, ridding themselves of accountability, then everyone would be equal. However, this plot puts much power in the hands of a few individuals, who are by nature evil. The result is always a tyrannical regime.
4. The Gospel is the good news of freedom from sin and its bondage. Jesus Christ's blood redeems the hearts of people, where the root of the world's evil lies. When God rules your life, you are not bound by fear and oppressive rules; instead you are free to love and obey.

Lesson 7

Name _____

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TOTALLY DEPRAVED: SIN IN EVERY PART

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

1. “ SIN is choosing what we know is wrong.”
2. “Thus, even in the HOME , the heart and hearth of society, a sense of DUTY has been replaced by a sense of ENTITLEMENT , a sense that we have a right to what we WANT , even if it means violating standards of PROPER behavior.”
3. “In any society, only two forces hold the SINFUL nature in check: the restraint of CONSCIENCE or the restraint of the WORD . The less that CITIZENS have of the former, the more the STATE must employ the latter.”
4. “ OBEDIENCE is an internal response to God as a PERSONAL being... At the heart of God’s commandments is a RELATIONSHIP . We are to love God with our whole BEING .”
5. “God is not the author of EVIL .”
6. “The original sin in the Garden has affected all of HUMANITY , so that every human being is born into a state of ALIENATION from God.”
7. “Every part of our being— INTELLECT , WILL , EMOTIONS , and the BODY —shows the effects of sin.”
8. “Moral standards are life- GIVING , life- ENHANCING , life- ENRICHING truths.”

SHORT ANSWER

1. A. Should we think of ourselves as incapable of certain sins?

We should not think of ourselves as incapable of some sins because, but for the grace of God, we can all be tempted and fall.

B. Why is the face of evil “frighteningly ordinary“?

People who commit the most heinous acts do not always look dark-eyed, hardened and sneering. In fact, they look just like us. Often they are plain and ordinary in appearance because the evil isn't in their faces; it's in their hearts. Anyone and everyone is capable of committing all sorts of evil acts. The book cites examples of a housewife and ordinary suburban schoolchildren who murdered in cold blood. Since every person, regardless of race, social class, religious background, age or education is born with an evil heart that is rebellious toward God, every person is capable of the same crimes.

2. Why do you think the celebrities and ordinary teens interviewed by MTV had such a hard time believing the seven deadly sins are indeed sinful?

Student answers may vary. Your student may talk about the pride that causes people to reject any notion of moral responsibility. Humans want to believe that they are their own gods and that all the choices they make are right. Your student may also choose to talk about how society has decayed so much that few people even recognize evil. Or your student may choose to talk about how there is so much psychological jargon that most people think of sins as “disorders” or even natural inclinations that should be expressed for the health of the individual. Based upon what we have learned thus far, make sure that your student's answer is on the right track.

3. A. How did the warden at the prison in Norway account for criminal behavior?

She believed that “anyone who commits a violent crime is obviously mentally unbalanced.”

B. What was “the cure” she implemented in the prison?

To correct their mental states, all the imprisoned individuals at her facility underwent therapy with a host of counselors and psychiatrists.

C. What happened days after Colson's visit that proved her cure didn't work?

Unfortunately, therapy didn't help because deep in the heart of each incarcerated person, there were sinful habits. Just days after Colson left, a Christian corrections officer was raped and murdered by one of the inmates on his way to a movie, which was part of his “therapy.”

4. Why do you think the imprisoned individuals at that prison in Norway only responded to Colson's message of sin and salvation with blank expressions?

Their hearts had been hardened to the message of sin and salvation because they had been taught to believe that they weren't sinners; they merely needed more “mental balance.” Perhaps they didn't understand his Gospel call because they didn't believe they were sinners. In their minds there was nothing from which they needed saving.

5. A. According to your reading, what is the “sense of entitlement”?

The sense of entitlement is the “sense that we have a right to all that we want, even if it means violating standards of proper behavior.”

- B. How does it compare with the moral sense?

The sense of entitlement leads people to believe they have a right to pursue any and every selfish desire that comes to their mind. On the other hand, having a moral sense restrains people—not from fulfilling their potential—but from destroying themselves and others. Moral sense reminds us of the consequences of our actions—both to ourselves and to others. A moral sense holds people accountable to a higher power by a law coming from a transcendent being.

6. How has evolutionary theory influenced the rise of the sense of entitlement in our society? Use Steven Pinker’s words from page 122 of *How Now Shall We Live?* in your answer.

According to Pinker, the human mind exists only to protect the genes of our own species. In other words, human beings can think so they can come up with ways to make sure that their offspring survive. Human reasoning, then, is entirely selfishly motivated. If evolution is true, how could anyone fault a person for abortion, theft, abuse, lying or cheating? If evolution is true, then people are excused for doing whatever it takes to ensure their survival. Evolutionary theory has influenced the rise of the sense of entitlement because anyone who stands in my way is blocking the unstoppable progress of nature; therefore, I can do whatever I want without consequences. I am “entitled” to do whatever it takes to pursue my own good. There is no moral accountability and no morality because humans are nothing more than products of nature, entitled to whatever they desire.

7. Sin damages our physical lives—we experience death, sickness and suffering. It also damages our relationships. What are the three types of relationships that are damaged by sin?

1. Sin ends our relationship with God.

Explain:

Since God is holy, He cannot commune with sinful men, and we are cut off from His presence. Sin blinds our eyes, deafens our ears and turns our hearts to stone. All humans are born dead in sin and rebellious to God’s intended purpose for their lives. Like an orchestra of instruments refusing to pay attention to the conductor, we all play our own song. The result is cacophony rather than sweet praise to our Maker.

2. Sin damages our relationships to each other.

Explain:

As Colson pointed out, “All the elements of social breakdown are right there in the early chapters of Genesis.” Our sinful hearts drive us to pursue our own pleasures and desires without thought for those around us. We war against each other to reach our selfish goals, sinning against others and being sinned against by others.

3. Sin damages our relationship with nature.

Explain:

As part of our curse, even physical laws rebel against us, and we damage the world around us. Our bodies slowly deteriorate, and disease strikes as well. Work is arduous toil; the earth is stubborn; and the sun is cruel. We ravage the world of its resources and kill and destroy the beauty of the earth. Animals gore men, and species become extinct. Scripture says that even the earth groans for its redemption as it waits for the Savior to return and bring shalom again.

8. Read Romans 3:10-18. What does this passage say about sin's effects on the three relationships mentioned in the previous question?
 1. **In the Romans passage, Paul cites two examples of the rupture between God and man: "there is no one...who seeks God" and "there is no fear of God before their eyes." Essentially, we have deliberately forgotten about God. God is holy and just and pure; He cannot fellowship with us in our stiff-necked state.**
 2. **The Romans passage also explains the rupture in the relationships between men: "their feet are swift to shed blood," "their tongues practice deceit," "their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness" and "the way of peace they do not know." In our natural state, we are simply incapable of co-existing peacefully with each other because each one whole-heartedly pursues his/her own selfish desires.**
 3. **The passage finally speaks of the "ruin and misery" that "mark their ways." Because of the curse of sin, men harm the beauty and peace of nature. Without respect for the earth, we act carelessly and destroy our own environment. We refuse to see it as a gift given from God, and we deny our role as stewards of His creation. Instead we choose to use the earth to pursue our own selfish gain.**
9. A. According to Romans 7:7, when society ignores God's law, what will we lose?

As Paul explains in Romans 7, without knowledge of the law, we lose the knowledge of our sins. The law teaches us what is right and what is wrong. We must know the law to know when we transgress it. Paul says that he would not have known it was wrong to covet unless he knew the law said, "Do not covet."

B. Will this rejection free us from the law's punishment (see Romans 2:12-15)?

Ignorance of the law does not set us free from guilt. Every person has been given a conscience that convicts him/her of sin. Even though we may ignore the law, we cannot ignore our consciences. We still have the knowledge of good and evil that God has written upon our hearts, and thus we are accountable. Every man's conscience accuses him when he transgresses the law, thus every man will be punished for his own iniquity.

10. Oswald Chambers, an early 20th century theologian, made the following statement concerning repentance: "He proves he is forgiven by being the opposite of what he was previously, by the grace of God. Repentance always brings a person to the point of saying, 'I have sinned.' The surest sign that God is at work in his life is when he says that and means it. Anything less is simply sorrow for having made foolish mistakes—a reflex action caused by self-disgust."¹

A. Can you remember a time in your life when you experienced true repentance?

Answers will vary for A-C. You may want to suggest some passages on repentance or forgiveness for your student to read.

B. Explain how God convicted you of your sin and how you were restored to Him.

C. What do you do to maintain a humble spirit of repentance before the Lord?

11. What is the Christian's hope for freedom from sin? **Use at least two Scripture passages in your answer.**

Answers will vary. Your student may choose to write about the hope of the Gospel that sets people free from the bondage of sin, or your student may choose to write about the hope of glory when Christians will be free from the effects of sin forever! Make sure that Scripture passages are appropriately used. You may want to suggest additional passages for your student to read.

¹ Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest* (Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House, 1992).

ESSAY

1. According to chapter 19, why does utopianism always lead to a loss of liberty?

Utopianism denies original sin. Instead, it says that all people are basically good and that evil resides in social structures. According to utopianism, the answer to destroying evil is to put away moral restraints and societal expectations so that people are free to express themselves unhindered. The problem is that without moral codes and societal restraints, people's sinfulness is unleashed. Sin and evil do not come from rules and society and structures, sin and evil come from the hearts of people.

In a vain effort to set people free to "be good," utopianism opens the doors for sin to come pouring out. But when that happens, people no longer understand where that sin comes from; they are confused and terrified. They no longer have the worldview and the moral reasoning to fix the problem. They become afraid of their neighbors and even afraid of their own children. Then to fix the problem, they welcome government control. Colson points out, "In any society, only two forces hold the sinful nature in check: the restraint of conscience or the restraint of the sword." Because utopian societies do away with the restraint of the conscience, the only answer is the sword. People then either freely give up or are stripped of their freedom and liberty in an attempt to stem the tide of sin.

2. As we saw in Lesson 2, the German philosopher Nietzsche did not accept the message of Christianity. He called it a "slave-morality." But what did he think of *sin*? What did he think was the *cause* of chaos and disorder in society? In the following excerpt, critic H.L. Mencken paraphrases Nietzsche's views of "sin" and "conscience":

But what, then, is conscience? That there is such a thing every reasonable man knows. But what is its nature and what is its origin?... Nietzsche answers that it is nothing more than the old will to power, turned inward. In the days of the cave men, a man gave his will to power free exercise. Any act which increased his power over his environment, no matter how much it damaged other men, seemed to him good. He knew nothing of morality. Things appeared to him, not as good or evil, but as good or bad—beneficial or harmful. But when civilization was born, there arose a necessity for controlling and regulating this will to power. The individual had to submit to the desire of the majority and to conform to nascent codes of morality. The result was that his will to power, which once spent itself in battles with other individuals, had to be turned upon himself. Instead of torturing others, he began to torture his own body and mind. His ancient delight in cruelty and persecution (a characteristic of all healthy animals) remained, but he could no longer satisfy it upon his fellow men and so he turned it upon himself, and straightway became a prey to the feeling of guilt, of sinfulness, of wrong-doing—with all its attendant horrors.

Now, one of the first forms that this self-torture took was primitive man's accusation against himself that he was not properly grateful for the favors of his god... In the early days, it was sufficient to sacrifice a square meal or a baby. But when Christianity—with its elaborate and certain theology—arose, it became necessary for a man to sacrifice himself.

Thus arose the Christian idea of sin. Man began to feel that he was in debt to his creator hopelessly and irretrievably, and that, like a true bankrupt, he should offer all that he had in partial payment. So he renounced everything that made life on earth bearable and desirable and built up an ideal of poverty and suffering. Sometimes he hid himself in a cave and lived like an outcast dog—and then he was called a saint. Sometimes he tortured himself with whips and poured vinegar into his wounds—and then he was a flagellant of the Middle Ages. Sometimes, he killed his sexual instinct and his inborn desire for property and power—and then he became a penniless celibate in a cloister.

Nietzsche shows that this idea of sin, which lies at the bottom of all religions, was and is an absurdity; that nothing, in itself, is sinful, and that no man is, or can be a sinner. If we could rid ourselves of the notion that

there is a God in Heaven, to whom we owe a debt, we would rid ourselves of the idea of sin. Therefore, argues Nietzsche, it is evident that skepticism, while it makes no actual change in man, always makes him feel better. It makes him lose his fear of hell and his consciousness of sin. It rids him of that most horrible instrument of senseless and costly torture—his conscience. “Atheism,” says Nietzsche, “will make a man innocent.”²

- A. According to what we’ve learned in these chapters and what we’ve read from Romans in this lesson, identify Nietzsche’s false assumption in the first paragraph. **Use a Scripture passage to explain why it is false.**

Nietzsche incorrectly claims that, in man’s early days, he was without conscience. He believed that humans went around doing whatever came naturally to them; he called this man’s “will to power.” According to Nietzsche, there was no guilt, no blame and no transgression because there was no law to hold anyone accountable. There was only complete freedom to pursue natural inclinations. However, Scripture says in Romans 2:12-15 that people have always been bound by the “natural law.” Man has always had a conscience that accuses him when he does wrong because God wrote the law on men’s hearts. Your student may choose other passages; make sure they are interpreted and applied correctly.

- B. According to Nietzsche, what is the origin of the concept of sin?

According to Nietzsche, when human beings began to create civilizations, man imposed laws on other men. But man still had the will to power and a base instinct for cruelty and blood (which Nietzsche believes is a characteristic of all healthy animals). Since it was no longer socially acceptable to inflict pain on others, man turned this desire in on himself, torturing himself. According to Nietzsche, the name of this self-torture is sin.

- C. Explain why Nietzsche believes that Christianity is self-torture.

Nietzsche believes that man began to self-criticize and feel guilt for actions; he says that this guilt was born of societal restraints. When Christianity came on the scene, the concept of self-sacrifice was introduced. Previously it was acceptable for men to sacrifice goods or children to their gods, but not so with Christianity. Nietzsche says that Christian theology was much more complex and demanded a sacrifice from each person. Thus, Nietzsche calls Christianity self-torture because Christians were guilt-ridden and then required to inflict pain on themselves in order to sacrifice to their God.

² Henry Louis Mencken, *The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche* (The Online Books Page, 1908) <http://www.geocities.com/danielmacryan/nietzsche16.html> (accessed December 10, 2005).

D. Explain why Nietzsche believes that atheism will make people innocent.

Nietzsche believes that if people could free themselves from the restraint and damaging guilt of religion, they would be free. If there is no God, then there is no law, no accountability, no Hell and no sin. Therefore, if we declare that God is dead, we set ourselves free from His laws and become innocent.

3. A. Answering from your experience and **using at least two Scripture passages**, does Christianity really bind people with irrational guilt?

Student answers will vary for the Scripture passages, but again, make sure that your student is correctly interpreting the passage, and offer any other passages that come to your mind. Christianity is not synonymous with condemning guilt as Nietzsche believed. Exactly the opposite, Christianity sets people free from guilty consciences and the condemnation of Satan and the law. The Gospel is a message of perfect, unconditional love and sacrifice for us, in spite of our sin. As John 3:17-18 says, "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son." This message could hardly result in self-torture, but rather freedom! Christians do still experience conviction and chastisement for sin (see Proverbs 3:12), but it is not a plaguing guilt because they know that they can take this guilt and throw it at the feet of Jesus where their transgressions will be forgiven.

B. Explain the Christian concept of self-sacrifice. Does Christian self-sacrifice require self-mutilation, isolationism or self-inflicted pain?

Christians also are called to sacrifice of themselves even as Christ gave Himself up on the cross. Philippians 2 calls believers to imitate Christ in His humility and sacrifice on the cross by looking out for the needs of others. This sacrifice is not a guilt-ridden, torturous burden; it is an expression of love to God for His forgiveness. We have been forgiven much, and we can't help but love in return. God calls us to humility and sacrifice so that we are obedient to Him and caring toward others, not so that we beat ourselves or torture our minds or destroy our bodies for no purpose. Those kinds of behaviors are a result of dualistic thinking about the body and the spirit. Christians do not self-inflict pain, but they do give up their desires for the sake of their God and for the sake of others. This isn't an oppressive message as Nietzsche thought. It is a beautiful truth. As Matthew 10:39 says, "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

4. As we learned in the text, God created perfect human beings in Adam and Eve. They were born without sinful natures, but when they fell, humanity fell with them. Now we are all born with hearts rebellious toward God. With this in mind, is it possible for a human being to freely choose to do good without divine intervention? Why or why not? **Use at least two Scripture passages to support your answer;** the passage may come from previous lessons or your own study.

Your students' answers will vary, but should reflect the understanding that without God, man is completely incapable of doing good (Romans 3:23). Isaiah 64:6 says our righteous acts are like "filthy rags" before the Lord God. Sometimes people do things that are good on the outside. But God calls even those acts filthy rags because they are incapable of winning His favor; He knows that even those acts are filled with sinful motives. On our own, we will always choose to sin and rebel. When Christ turns our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh, then we are able to act in righteousness, but it is not a righteousness of our own. It is the righteousness of Christ in us (Ephesians 1:3-10).

5. The doctrine of **federal headship** teaches that all people fell with Adam in the garden and thus all humans are culpable for sin. Adam was mankind's representative, and in his actions, we all stand guilty. Jesus Christ is called the Second Adam. Read Romans 5:12-21, and explain why He is given this title.

This may be the first time your student has heard this teaching. If so, he/she will have to use critical thinking skills to answer the question. Encourage your student, but also make sure that his/her answer is doctrinally sound.

Verse 17 says, "For if, by the trespass of one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ." The first Adam was given a sinless nature, but when tempted in the garden, he fell into sin and brought death to all mankind. Jesus, the Second Adam, was the second man to be born without a sinful nature. He also was tempted, but He did not fall into sin. Just as we all fell in Adam, so we can all be justified in Christ. The first Adam brought death, but the Second Adam brought eternal life; the first Adam imputed sin to all, but the Second Adam imputed righteousness. Both acted on behalf of others, but only the Second Adam brought life.

6. Now read Joshua 11:20; Proverbs 16:9; Isaiah 63:17; 65:1; Romans 9:17-18 and Jude 1:4a. What do these verses reveal to us about God's involvement with the human race? Does God merely know what the future holds, or is He in control of it? Does He react to men's actions, surprised by what we do, or does He order all things?

God sovereignly controls all the earth, including the actions and hearts of men. The Joshua passage shows God hardening the hearts of those who oppose Israel, so that He might demonstrate His wrath and justice. Proverbs tells us that, while we make plans for

our lives, it is God who controls our steps. In Isaiah, the prophet asks God why He continues to “make us wander from your ways and harden our hearts so we do not revere you.” Paul speaks clearly of God’s dominion over our eternal destination in Romans when he says, “God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.” Finally, Jude mentions “men whose condemnation was written about long ago.” All of these verses demonstrate God’s ultimate and absolute control over His creation.

Not only does God know the things that will be, but He also *controls* the things that will be. There isn’t a second when God is surprised or doesn’t know the outcome. He never rings His hands in worry, wondering what will happen next. God never paces the Heavens waiting for people to act so that He can react. The actions, lives, hearts, thoughts and plans of people are in the hands of God. He has eternally decreed what will come to pass.

7. If God controls all things, then are people not responsible for their actions? Are humans puppets in the hands of God? How can people be called guilty for their deeds if all things are already determined by God? Some theologians have described sovereignty and human responsibility as an equation of $100\% + 100\% = 100\%$. This equation may not make mathematical sense, but it is true. God is completely and totally 100% sovereign, yet man is completely and totally 100% responsible for his actions. **Use Romans 3:5-6 and Philippians 2:12-13** to describe the relationship between God’s sovereignty and human responsibility.

This is a very difficult truth to grasp. It is hard for us to wrap our finite minds around a truth of the Infinite. Like explaining the doctrine of the Trinity, explaining God’s sovereignty and human responsibility can be complicated. As you help your student, try to stick to what the Scriptures say concerning this topic. The Holy Spirit will illuminate His Word, and Scripture will interpret Scripture. If you know of other applicable passages, feel free to suggest them to your student.

In Romans, Paul anticipates his readers’ argument. He knows they will think that if God’s righteousness is brought out by the unrighteous acts of men, then isn’t God unjust to judge us? “Certainly not!” the apostle exclaims. God is not unjust, and we are still responsible for our actions; how else could God judge the world? In Philippians 2, Paul urges his readers to “work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” This is human responsibility; Christians are responsible to pursue sanctification and to piously work out their faith. Yet in the same sentence, Paul says that it is “God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.” How can it be that God is working in us, when we are called to work out our own salvation? $100\% + 100\% = 100\%$. Both truths are held at the same time; the Christian firmly stands upon the rock of God’s sovereign ruling, and the Christian whole-heartedly believes that he/she is responsible before God for his/her actions.

8. Before answering, read the following question and answer from the *Heidelberg Catechism*.

Question 27: What dost thou mean by the providence of God?

The almighty and everywhere present power of God; whereby, as it were by his hand, he upholds and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures; so that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, and all things come, not by chance, but by his fatherly hand.

- A. Is belief in God's sovereignty meant to be a doctrine that causes fear and frustration?

The doctrine of God's sovereignty is meant to be a comfort to the believer.

- B. Should Christians feel oppressed by God's providential rule?

If God is not sovereign, how can we trust Him in times of need? If God is not sovereign, then man's actions are supreme. What a comfort to know that, despite our sin and despite the sins of others, God is still working a plan for our good (Romans 8:28). Despite the confusion of the world, God is directing the actions of men, and He has determined the result. Nothing happens to us by accident, and all things come from His loving hand—even the trials and tests. Only an awesome God could create such a plan!

DEFINITIONS

1. **Moral autonomy:** the belief that man is morally independent and can establish a personal system of right and wrong; man is not governed by the moral code of a transcendent being
2. **Federal headship:** the doctrine that in Adam all humans sinned against God
3. **Imputation:** the ascribing of Adam's sin to all men, and Christ's righteousness to all believers; in the Fall, Adam's transgression was imputed to all mankind and in salvation Christ's righteousness is given—imputed—to Christians

KEY CONCEPTS

1. God is not the author of evil, but He is sovereign over it.
2. Adam committed a sinful act, and all of humanity fell with him. Humans were created sinless, but with Adam acting as our representative, we all chose the path of evil and destruction.
3. Utopianism leads to a loss of liberty because people lose all guards against sin. Unrestrained by moral codes or a healthy fear, sin reigns without bound in a utopian society. Eventually people become so afraid of the power of evil that, feeling utterly incapable of stemming the tide of evil, they willingly give more control to the state.
4. God is 100% sovereign and man is 100% responsible.

Lesson 8

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HOUSING _____

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STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

1. “God does not PLAY DICE with the universe.”
2. “If there is no God, then ‘good’ and ‘EVIL’ are nothing more than subjective FEELINGS that reflect what our CULTURE has taught us to approve or disapprove, or what we individually happen to LIKE or DISLIKE.”
3. “On its own terms, ATHEISM simply has no answer, and the pointlessness of our SUFFERING makes it all the more PAINFUL.”
4. “The power of POSITIVE thinking cannot erase the objective reality of SUFFERING and DEATH.”
5. “If the terms GOOD and EVIL do not apply to ultimate reality, then they are mere quirks of our own subjective CONSCIOUSNESS.”
6. “The God of Scripture does not need to build a temporary HELL in order to produce HEAVEN.”
7. “There must be a source of SIN outside of GOD.”
8. “Evil is created by SIN.”
9. “God uses the ‘THORNS and THISTLES’ that have infested creation since the Fall to TEACH, CHASTISE, SANCTIFY and TRANSFORM us, making us ready for that new heaven and earth.”

SHORT ANSWER

1. A. Based upon his scientific studies, Einstein had determined that there must be an intelligent designer. However, what problem plagued him?

Einstein struggled with the problem of evil, the problem of suffering in the world. If God is good, then how can He watch people suffer? Does He have no control over pain and suffering? Is He really not good? Or is He really not in control of everything?

- B. What was his conclusion?

Einstein concluded that God was nothing more than an impersonal being—maybe even a force—that created the order and the harmony in the universe. However, this force merely wound up the world, setting things in motion. God doesn't watch over the universe or care about the plight of man; He is not responsible, and He is not omnipotent.

2. A. What is “process theology”?

Process theology says that God is still in the process of becoming. He isn't perfect, complete and omnipotent because He is still in the process of evolving.

- B. How has it attempted to solve the problem of suffering?

Since God isn't complete, He isn't completely in control; therefore, He cannot stop the problem of suffering. He would like to help, and someday He will become infinite and omnipotent. In the meantime, we are “comforted” knowing that God isn't done becoming. He wants to help, but He just can't right now.

3. Currently, there is a theology gaining popularity among evangelical Christians called the “openness of God.” According to this theology, God doesn't have complete foreknowledge. He also doesn't have an eternal counsel by which He declares what will come to pass. Instead, He is as surprised as we are when events occur. Believers in the openness of God say that God is still powerful and maintains some control by responding to the world's events. In other words, He watches, and then He reacts.

- A. Can you see how process theology is a “fuller flowering” of the openness of God? Explain the connection between these teachings.

Openness of God theology chips away at the omnipotence and omniscience of God. If God doesn't have foreknowledge, then He doesn't know all things. If God doesn't know all things, then He is not completely infinite. If God isn't infinite, then He isn't perfect. You can easily see how it is one small step to apply evolutionary theory here. Process theologians pick up where the openness of God theologians left off, saying that if the world is evolving, then perhaps God is evolving too. God may not know all now, He may not be in control of all; but evolution gives us hope, says the process theologian. God isn't done yet; He is well-intentioned and still becoming infinite. As humanity evolves, God evolves as well, until one day He will reach perfection.

- B. Look up and read the following passages. **Explain how these passages prove that process theology and the openness of God are false teachings.**

Psalm 139:16; Isaiah 46:9-10; Psalm 33:11.

According to Psalm 139:16; Isaiah 46:9-10 and Psalm 33:11, not only did God know all things before they came to pass, but He also declared or ordained all things. In His eternal counsel, He determined the course of history (His story). So, absolutely nothing surprises Him or thwarts His plan. The openness of God theology must be false because God knows all things. To deny this truth is to blaspheme God by denying one of His very attributes, His omniscience.

Malachi 3:6 and Hebrews 13:8.

Malachi and Hebrews declare that, unlike man, God does not change. He is “the same yesterday and today and forever.” Process theology also is false doctrine because it rejects the immutability (changelessness) of God Almighty. Process theology and the openness of God are damaging teachings, for where is the comfort for a believer in a God who is not infinite, omniscient, omnipotent and immutable? How thankful we should be that we serve the infinite God of the Bible, rather than the god of these false doctrines.

4. A. Why is it necessary that God condemn evil?

God is holy and pure, completely without error or fault. He loves good, and therefore He must hate evil. His very nature is good. However, He is also just. A good being who is just must condemn evil because otherwise sin goes unpunished. Justice requires that there is a punishment for wrong-doing; someone or something must pay the price. Perfect justice and perfect holiness require a payment for sin. Because He loved the Israelites as His children, He spared them from paying for their own sin in Hell. But someone or something had to shed blood for their sins.

- B. In the Old Testament, how did God spare His people from the punishment for sin?

The Old Testament saints used the blood of bulls and goats to pay for their iniquity. They continually sacrificed these animals for their sins. However, the blood of these animals was a picture of something greater yet to come.

- C. In the New Testament, how did God do the same?

In the New Testament, God sent His only Son to pay the penalty for the sins of His children. God Himself became a man and took upon Himself all the sins of all His children. Bearing their guilt, He died on the cross taking our place as the ultimate sacrifice for our sins.

5. Now read Ezekiel 28:1-19. In these verses, the prophet speaks to the literal king of Tyre, comparing him to Satan and Satan’s fall from Heaven.

A. What sin caused Satan’s fall?

Satan had beauty, gifts and talents from the Lord. However, he chose not to give God the glory for his abilities. Instead, he held back praise for himself. He said in his heart that he was like God, that he was his own god. Pride was his sin (vs. 2 and vs. 17); pride and vanity blinded him. He thought too highly of himself, given his position on “the holy mount of God,” and consequently he corrupted his relationship with his Creator.

B. In what ways does Satan’s fall remind you of the Fall of man in the garden?

Just like Satan, man was beautiful and without fault in the Garden of Eden. Satan said in his heart, “I am a god; I sit on the throne of a god in the heart of the seas.” Satan then tempted man with the same proposition. He told Eve that if she ate of the fruit, she would “be like God.” Satan tripped up humanity with the same sin that caused his fall: pride.

C. Does mankind still continue in the same sin today?

This ugly sin still tempts people today. People reject God in their hearts, refusing to obey Him, refusing to confess Him as God. We think highly of our abilities, and in self-sufficient arrogance, we suppress the truth within us. We excuse our sin and think that we are wise, in control and the gods of our lives, accountable to no one.

6. What is the purpose of suffering (see Romans 5:3-5)?

Romans teaches that suffering builds character, perseverance and hope in God’s glory. Without suffering, why would Christians long for a heavenly home? Without suffering, why would Christians need to lean on God?

MATCHING

In the following section, please match the quote with its corresponding “solution” from Colson’s text. Underline any phrases or sentences that show why that particular quote belongs to that “solution.”

- A. Solution #1: Deny that God exists at all
- B. Solution #2: Deny that suffering exists
- C. Solution #3: Place God beyond good and evil
- D. Solution #4: God’s power is limited

1. B In every truth the opposite is equally true...The dividing line that seems to lie between this world and eternity, between suffering and bliss, between good and evil, is also an illusion...The world...is not imperfect or slowly evolving along a long path to perfection. No, it is perfect at every moment; every sin already carries grace within it, all small children are potential old men, all sucklings have death within them, all dying people—eternal life...Therefore, it seems to me that everything that exists is good—death as well as life, sin as well as holiness, wisdom as well as folly. Everything is necessary, everything needs only my agreement, my assent, my loving understanding; then all is well with me and nothing can harm me. I learned through my body and soul that

it was necessary for me to sin, that I needed lust, that I had to strive for property and experience nausea and the depths of despair in order to learn not to resist them, in order to learn to love the world, and no longer compare it with some kind of desired imaginary world, some imaginary vision of perfection, but to leave it as it is, to love it and be glad to belong to it.¹

2. C I am the heat that withholds
and sends down the rains;
I am immortality and death;
both being and nonbeing am I.

I am impartial to all creatures,
and no one is hateful or dear to me;
but men devoted to me are in me,
and I am within them.

If he is devoted solely to me,
even a violent criminal
must be deemed a man of virtue,
for his resolve is right.²

3. D Maybe God does not cause our suffering. Maybe it happens for some reason other than the will of God. The psalmist writes, “I lift mine eyes to the hills; from where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, maker of Heaven and earth” (Psalm 121:1-2). He does not say, “My pain comes from the Lord,” or “my tragedy comes from the Lord.” He says “my help comes from the Lord.”
- Could it be that God does not cause the bad things that happen to us? Could it be that He doesn’t decide which families shall give birth to a handicapped child, that He did not single out Ron to be crippled by a bullet or Helen by a degenerative disease, but rather that He stands ready to help them and us cope with our tragedies if we could only get beyond the feelings of guilt and anger that separate us from Him? Could it be that ‘How could God do this to me?’ is really the wrong question for us to ask?
- An engine bolt breaks on flight 205 instead of on flight 209, inflicting tragedy on one random group of families rather than another. There is no message in all of that. There is no reason for those particular people to be afflicted rather than others. These events do not reflect God’s choices. They happen at random, and randomness is another name for chaos, in those corners of the universe where God’s creative light has not yet penetrated. And chaos is evil; not wrong, not malevolent, but evil nonetheless, because by causing tragedies at random, it prevents people from believing in God’s goodness.
- I no longer hold God responsible for illnesses, accidents, and natural disasters, because I realize that I gain little and I lose so much when I blame God for those things. I can worship a God who hates suffering but cannot eliminate it, more easily than I can worship a God who chooses to make children suffer and die, for whatever exalted reason.
- Religion alone can affirm the afflicted person’s sense of self-worth. Science can describe what has happened to a person; only religion can call it a tragedy. Only the voice of religion, when it frees itself from the need to defend and justify God for all that happens, can say to the afflicted person, “You are a good person, and you deserve better. Let me come and sit with you so that you will know that you are not alone.”³

¹ Herman Hesse, *Siddhartha*, trans. Hilda Rosner (New York: New Directions, 1951). Prince Siddhartha Gautama is credited as the first to popularize Buddhism.

² Barbara Stoller Miller, trans. *The Bhagavad-Gita* (New York: Bantam, 1986). This is an important Hindu text. The speaker of the poem is the god Krishna.

³ Harold Kushner, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* (New York: Anchor, 2004).

4. A Why is there any misery at all in the world? Not by chance, surely. From some cause then. Is it from the intention of the Deity? But he is perfectly benevolent. Is it contrary to his intention? But he is almighty.⁴

Christianity claims both that God created the world and that he sustains it. Christianity claims that God knows all things and is capable of all feats. Christianity claims that God is perfectly good, and wants only the best for his Creation. If each of these claims is true, though, then it is difficult to see why God allows the evil in the world to persist. The evil in the world thus appears to be at least strong and perhaps even conclusive evidence that at least one of these central claims of Christianity is false.

There are two kinds of evil in the world: moral and natural; both appear to exist in abundance. Moral evils are those evils that are freely inflicted upon humankind by humankind: deceit, murder, theft, etc.; they result from the choices of free agents. Natural evils are those evils that occur as the result of natural processes: earthquakes, forest fires, tsunamis, etc. The problem of natural evil is thus the problem of explaining why God allows this latter kind of evil to occur.

The most common response to the problem of evil—the free-will defence—holds that God rightly chose to create humankind free, and that evil is the result of our abuse of that freedom. Evil is not God’s fault; it is ours. This defence applies only to moral evil; natural evil does not result from the choices of free agents, and so cannot be justified in this way. Natural evil therefore poses a greater threat to belief in God than moral evil.

The goodness of a creator is proportional to the goodness of that which he creates. A carpenter who makes a fragile table with uneven legs is a bad carpenter. A carpenter who makes a strong and beautiful table is better.

As God is a perfect Creator, then, so God’s creation must also be perfect. If God created this world, it seems, then this must be the best of all possible worlds... There are many ways in which it might be thought that the world might have been better. The world might, for example, have contained less wars, or less unpleasant diseases, or less destructive volcanic eruptions... If it is accepted both that if God existed then the world would be perfect, and that the world is not perfect, then it must also be accepted that God does not exist.⁵

ESSAY

You probably noticed that we left out of the above section Solution #5: God has created evil to achieve a greater good. This course has been all about thinking Christianly and using Scripture to create a Christian worldview, a way of looking at the world with discernment. Let’s now use our knowledge of Scripture and the analytic skills we have been developing throughout this course to analyze what the book says about Solution #5.

1. Read Isaiah 45:7 and Job 34:10. Did God create evil?
Read 1 Samuel 18:10; Judges 9:23 and Amos 3:6. Does God use evil?
Read James 1:13-14 and Psalm 5:4. Is God evil or guilty of evil acts?
How can all these things be true?

These may be the most difficult questions a Christian can answer. Truly it is difficult for finite minds to grasp the infinite. Theologians have debated how to answer the question of evil and the origin of sin for centuries. Don’t be afraid to let your student struggle to find the answer. Perhaps your student may want to correspond with you through letters to further study the issue.

⁴ David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998).

⁵ Tim Holt, “Arguments for Atheism,” *Philosophy of Religion* .Info
<http://www.philosophyofreligion.info/atheisticproofs.html> (accessed Dec. 21, 2005).

What we know to be true is contained in the Scriptures. Isaiah does say that God creates evil (the word translated “disaster” is actually the Hebrew word for evil). However, we also know that God is totally holy, incapable of sinning. It seems that the passage in Isaiah refers to God causing catastrophes, trials and calamities, not God creating the concept of evil at the beginning of time. God is not the author of evil, but we know that God continually uses evil. He sends evil spirits, plagues and calamities. He has an ultimate purpose that we cannot see or understand, and He chooses to use evil to accomplish that purpose.

We cannot blame God for our sin, and we cannot call Him the author of evil. Yet we know that He uses evil, and He is sovereign over it. How can this be? Perhaps we must hold our hands over our mouths and stand in awe of a God whose depths we cannot fathom. We would be remiss to reject any one of these passages, “for all Scripture is God-breathed and profitable...” (2 Timothy 3:16). Yet, we cannot always find ways to reconcile all the truths contained therein. We do not throw our hands up in exasperation or shake frustrated fists at God. Nor do we shrug our shoulders and push these questions from apathetic minds. We hold all Scripture in our hands, grasping every truth contained therein, and we trust that there is an answer and there is a holy and beautiful purpose in it all.

2. Chapter 21 says, “The only way God could create beings that are fully human was to take the risk that they would use their freedom to choose evil.” Do you think using the word “risk” in this context might cause misunderstanding? Does God take risks with His creation? Can anything really be a “risk” to all-powerful and sovereign God? Use Ephesians 1:9-10 in your answer.

God not only knows all things that will come to pass, but He determined, declared, ordained all things. How could anything be a risk to Him? He controls the outcome of all things; therefore, nothing is ever a “risk” to Him. If you have a God who takes risks, you have a God who is not omnipotent. Furthermore, God could hardly gamble with mankind, the precious crown of His creation. Ephesians 1:9-10 says that God “purposed in Christ” to bring all things under Christ. Christ is the sacrifice for man’s sin, for man’s transgression against God. If God determined that Christ would bring all things into subjection, then God’s eternal counsel included the Fall and redemption of mankind. God did not make men sin, and He is not responsible for man’s sin. However, He is sovereign over it. He doesn’t wait in the heavens wringing His hands and wondering what man will do next, He wills all things that come to pass and absolutely nothing can thwart His will.

3. The following excerpt was written by Martin Luther, a leader of the Protestant Reformation, in his book *The Bondage of the Will*. Luther wrote this book in response to a book about free will written by a theologian named Erasmus. Erasmus believed that every man is born with a free will, without a sinful nature compelling him to sin, and with the ability to choose God’s salvation or to choose to sin.

In Romans 8, dividing the human race into two, “flesh” and “spirit,” as Christ does in John 3 (v. 6), he says: “They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit” (v. 5). That Paul here calls all “carnal” that are not “spiritual” is plain, both from the opposition of “spirit” and “flesh” in the division itself, and from Paul’s own next words: “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (v. 9). What is the meaning of: “Ye are not in the flesh, if the Spirit is in you,”

but those who have not the Spirit are of necessity in the flesh? And he that is not Christ's, whose else is he but Satan's? It stands good then, that those who lack the Spirit are in the flesh, and under Satan.

Now let us see what Paul thinks about endeavor and the power of "free-will" in carnal men. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." Again: "The carnal mind is death." Again: "The carnal mind is enmity against God." Once more: "It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (vv. 5-8). Let the guardian of "free-will" answer the following question: How can endeavors towards good be made by that which is death, and displeases God, and is enmity against God, and disobeys God, and cannot obey Him?... Paul here calls everything without the Spirit "flesh," as I have shown. Therefore, the highest virtues of the best men are "in the flesh"; that is, they are dead, and at enmity with God, not subject to God's law nor able to be so, and not pleasing God... Wherefore, "free-will" is nothing but the slave of sin, death and Satan, not doing anything, nor able to do or attempt anything, but evil!⁶

We know that Adam had free will when he was created without sin in the garden. But with his sin came spiritual death and enslavement to sin—for all mankind. According to Luther, are humans now born with a truly free will? Why or why not?

Student answers will vary. But answers should recognize that man has no free choice to do good. On his own, man can only do evil because his sinful nature binds him to evil. As the federal head of mankind, Adam chose to sin, and in his sin we all fell. Adam had a free will, but every person born after him is born with a will bound by sin. Augustine explained it this way: Adam was able not to sin, we are not able not to sin, and in Heaven we will not be able to sin. Just as God is bound by His nature, so humans are bound by their nature. God cannot sin because He is holy; humans cannot stop sinning (without Christ) because we are sinful. Feel free to offer Scripture passages to help your student answer this question. Here are some suggestions: John 6:44; 15:16; Proverbs 16:1; 21:1; Jeremiah 10:23; Romans 3:11.

4. Many critics of Luther felt that his rejection of "free-will" also obliterated man's moral responsibility. If from the day we are born we cannot choose to do good, how can we be responsible for sinning? If God directs our steps, are we accountable? How does Scripture answer these questions? (Suggested passages—Philippians 2:12; 1 John 1:10)

In Adam, we all sinned. We are all guilty because we would all have made the same choice. Every person is responsible for his/her actions, motives, thoughts and intents. Recall the illustration of 100% + 100% = 100%. God is totally sovereign and man is totally responsible (remember Philippians 2:12)—at the same time! No one has an excuse before God, and only a man blinded by pride would tell the Lord that he is not guilty for his actions. So, clearly each man knows his own sin and knows when his motives are evil. 1 John 1:10 says, "If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives." This passage shows how each person knows his/her own sin. Only a fool would deny it. Your student may choose to use other passages explaining God's sovereignty or the responsibility of man. If your student is having difficulty, suggest passages from other questions in this lesson or passages from your own study.

⁶ Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, trans. J.I. Packer and O.R. Johnson (London: James Clarke & Co., 1957).

5. In previous lessons, we learned that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. It isn't just man who glorifies God; the purpose of all creation and all events is to bring glory to God. In the Protestant Reformation, the Reformers taught the "five solas": Scripture alone, grace alone, by faith alone, through Christ alone, **to God alone be the glory**. Theologians call the glory of God the unifying theme of all of Scripture. How is this truth a comfort to believers? What does it mean to you personally?

Answers will vary. The unifying theme of Scripture is the glory of God. All history is a display of God's glory. God uses people, events, nature, governments, etc. to display all of His glorious attributes from justice and wrath to love, from omnipotence and omniscience to mercy, jealousy, holiness, perfection, beauty, kindness, long-suffering. The knowledge that all things are working to glorify God is a comfort to the believer because we know the end result! We know the purpose, and we know the end of the story. We need not fret or panic or worry, because we know that everything that happens will somehow bring Him glory. We may not understand His ways; we may not recognize His hand, but we must remember that we but "see through a glass darkly." God is in control, and He is working all things for His own glory. Thus, Christian theology should not magnify man, but glorify God just as John the Baptist cried out, "He must increase that I might decrease."

6. The glorification of God is a great comfort to the believer, but there are also other promises in Scripture that bring us comfort. Even while God glorifies Himself, He does what, according to Romans 8:28? What does this passage teach us about the meaning of events in the world? In our personal lives? Is this promise to all people, or for those who follow Him?

Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." What a gracious God we serve—one who works even tragedy, suffering, injustice, sin, abuse, trial and pain for the good of His precious children! God doesn't just use evil for our good; He uses *all* things. Laws, scientific discoveries, elections, hurricanes, wars, famines, kingdoms rising and kingdoms falling—God works all things for our good. How amazing it is when a Christian realizes that the history and current events of the world are working for his/her own good! How comforting it is for a Christian to know that the difficulties and burdens of his/her own life are also working for his/her good. Joy and pain, trouble and ease in our own lives and the lives of those we know also work for our good. Only a God who knows *all* things and controls all things could do such marvelous acts, orchestrating all things for His own glory and the good of His saints! This promise is only for those who "love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

7. The end of chapter 21 says, “God loved us so much that even when he foresaw the sin and suffering that would darken and distort his creation, he chose to create us anyway.” Keep this quote in mind and read the following excerpts. The first is from the *Heidelberg Catechism*, Q & A 10 and the second is from the *Westminster Larger Catechism* Q & A 12:

“Q10. What dost thou mean by the providence of God?

A10. Providence is the almighty and ever-present power of God, whereby, as were by His hand, He upholds and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures; so that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, and all things come, not by chance, but by His fatherly hand.”

“Q12. What are the decrees of God?

A12. God’s decrees are the wise, free, and holy acts of the counsel of his will, whereby, from all eternity, he hath, for his own glory, unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass in time, especially concerning angels and men.”

8. Now read Isaiah 45:7; Jeremiah 5:24; 32:42; John 9:3; Ephesians 1:11; Romans 8:28; Proverbs 22:2 and 16:33. What do these verses, as well as the catechisms, demonstrate about the suffering Christians may experience? Did God simply foresee what would happen to His creation? Is God unable to keep bad things from happening in your life? Is He not in control of the events of your life? Is God removed from your pain and suffering, indifferent to your plight? Is your answer to these questions a comfort to you?

While man is fully responsible for his actions, God is sovereign over all. Even sin and suffering must ultimately be understood as part of God’s eternal plan, even though we may never call Him the author of evil. From the Jeremiah passages, we see that God gives both calamity and prosperity. God doesn’t just watch the fruitful and lean years occur, He *gives* them. John tells us that a blind man was made blind, not by any specific sin of himself or his parents, but so that “the work of God might be displayed in his life.” Finally, the verses of Proverbs demonstrate that God makes some rich and some poor, and every decision of the “lot” comes from our Father’s hand.

If God was not in control of these things, what comfort would there be for the Christian? How could we trust a God who doesn’t determine what comes to pass? How could we be comforted by a God who is as helpless and befuddled as we? Many Christians misunderstand God’s sovereignty, believing that God does not cause bad things to happen; He merely reacts to catastrophes. They may say that it is a comfort to know that God only wants your good and therefore He had no part in the evil that has happened in your life or in the world. However, what comfort is that? Why would we worship a God who is nothing more than an infinite empathizer? It is true that God wants good for His children. God may use suffering, disappointment and pain to bring about your good. Don’t confuse what you believe is good for yourself with what God *knows* is good for you. He dearly loves you, and He has good plans for your life (Jeremiah 29:11). However, how He works those good plans and how we want Him to work those good plans aren’t always the same thing. He will do *whatever* it takes to make you into the image of His Son. You may think that your good means health, wealth and comfort, but God knows that your good means developing fruits of the spirit like long-suffering, selflessness and love.

Encourage your student that the Father is not malicious or morbid. He does not delight in the suffering of His children! But He does delight in their spiritual growth. If a Christian

is sick with cancer, God does not laugh with glee because He revels in watching His child writhe with pain. On the contrary, God loves to watch His children develop Christ-like characteristics through the pain and suffering. Because of our sinful nature, testing is required to cause our faith to grow. Without trial, we cannot learn “patterns of righteousness” that delight our Heavenly Father.

9. Describe a time when someone you know was suffering. What could you have done (or did do) to comfort him/her?

Student answers will vary, but his/her response to the latter part of the question should demonstrate his/her grasp of suffering and its purpose in this corrupted world. The only comfort for a Christian in times of trial is the knowledge that God reigns supreme and even this trial is from His hand. We do not deny that disease, abuse, poverty or crime is evil. They are offensive to God’s law and His righteous character. However, God is using those things for the good of His children; they are not outside of His power, control and eternal decree. You may want to suggest some passages your student may use to offer comfort to the suffering.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Openness of God:** the belief that God does not have complete omniscience, that is, He does not know all things; God does not have perfect foreknowledge, nor did He foreordain all things that come to pass
2. **Process theology:** the doctrine that God is still in the process of becoming—though He is God, He is not perfect and complete; He evolves along with the world
3. **Free will:** the doctrine of Adam’s original free will in the garden; he was given the choice to obey God or to fall into sin; because he was not born with a sinful nature, his will was free to make this choice
4. **Bondage of the will:** the doctrine that, after the Fall of Adam in the garden, men are born with sinful natures, totally depraved and enslaved to sin; the early church father, Augustine explained it this way: “Adam was able not to sin; we are not able not to sin; in heaven we will not be able to sin.”
5. **Omniscient:** the doctrine that God is all-knowing
6. **Omnipotent:** the doctrine that God is all-powerful

Key Concepts

1. Man was created perfect and with a free will; he then sinned and became saturated with evil. Because of this utter saturation, his will is now bound, and he cannot return to his perfect state without divine intervention.
2. With every erroneous belief about evil and its origin comes the inability to cope with pain and suffering when it inevitably comes into our lives.
3. Not only is God complete and infinite, but He is also all-knowing and all-powerful.
4. God controls pain and suffering and evil in the world. But He is not the author of evil. He uses sin to bring Himself glory and to work good for His children.

Lesson 9

Name _____

ID# _____

HOUSING _____

INSTITUTION _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

THE SEARCH FOR REDEMPTION

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

1. “Yet ALL human beings yearn, deep in their HEARTS , for DELIVERANCE from sin and guilt.”
2. “This is the great HUMAN predicament: Sooner or later, even the most DECENT among us know that there is a ROTTENNESS at our core.”
3. “ AMERICA has a highly developed, technologically advanced industry—the ADVERTISING industry—designed to ENTICE us with the promise of redemption through MATERIALISM and COMMERCIALISM .”
4. “The powerful allure of RELIGION and ADVERTISING is the same.” Both REASSURE us that ‘we will be RESCUED .’”
5. “Through advertising, the ‘ RELIGION ’ of APPETITE and ego GRATIFICATION is offered to us as a solution to the human dilemma, a comfort in our insecurities, a way of SALVATION .”
6. “There is never enough WEALTH and POWER to satisfy, never enough material possessions to blot out GUILT .”

SHORT ANSWER

1. Why did Dr. Bernard Nathanson believe that he was helping the weak by performing abortions?

When Dr. Nathanson first began performing abortions, abortion was illegal in America. Only the rich could afford illegal abortions in America or the airfare to fly to a country where abortion was legal. Poor women were “forced” to resort to other methods of abortion out of their own homes. Women would use crude tools that would cause internal hemorrhaging, infection, sterility, etc. Dr. Nathanson believed that he was helping the poor to get affordable abortions so they didn’t have to resort to dangerous methods. He convinced himself that he was helping the poor and the weak.

2. When the film *The Silent Scream* first came out, pro-choice advocates said that the film was a fake. After its veracity was proven, pro-choice advocates questioned whether or not a fetus could actually feel pain. Recently, 4-D ultrasound machines have come out, showing clear images of developing babies' eyes, fingers, noses and legs. Some pro-choice advocates call these machines "dangerous" because they lead people to believe that a fetus is a person. According to Romans 1:18-20, what are pro-choice supporters doing?

Paul speaks of those "who suppress the truth by their wickedness." It is clear and obvious that a fetus is a human being. Unborn babies suck their thumbs, bounce and play and cup their tiny fingers around their faces as they sleep. Obviously, they are persons. Obviously, they feel pain. Yet, sin blinds men to the truth. Just as some deny the existence of God, others live as if there is no God so they can pursue their own personal ambitions—even if it is at the expense of another's life.

3. A. What did Nathanson discover as he watched an ultrasound for the first time?

Nathanson knew intellectually that an unborn baby had a heartbeat, developed organs, a brain, tiny fingers and toes within weeks of conception. However, as long as he called the baby a fetus and treated it like a blob in the mother's womb, he was never confronted with the reality of the baby's humanity. Nathanson observed on a screen the picture of the developing baby's forehead, eyes, nose, mouth, fingers, heart, toes, spine, etc. Even in his mind he could no longer reduce the tiny babe to nothing more than a fetus.

- B. What does Scripture say about the unborn? Use Job 31:15 and Psalm 139:13-16 in your answer.

Job says that God forms man in the mother's womb. Babies are not accidents or blobs of tissue; they are God's creation. Psalm 139 uses such tender language to describe God's handiwork in the womb. He "knits" our "inmost being," watching our unformed bodies and weaving us together "in the depths of the earth."

4. A. Recall the "great human predicament" from chapter 23. How did Nathanson come to this predicament?

The "great human predicament" comes when we discover the inner "rottenness," our sinful nature. When we reach this point, we realize that simply "being good" cannot overcome our corruption, and we are left wondering where to turn for redemption. Nathanson came to this predicament when he began to realize just how precious human fetuses are. When he saw the ultrasound image of the tiny baby, he knew that he could no longer deny its personhood.

- B. How was this predicament resolved for him?

Nathanson began to clearly see his past sin; he thought that he had been "helping" women, but actually he had been killing thousands of little girls and boys. He eventually stopped performing abortions for this reason, but he still did not feel at rest.

He was plagued by guilt, despair and confusion. Turning to popular religious practices and spiritualities did not save him. Rallying for good causes didn't resolve the tension within him. Studying more didn't bring him peace. It was only through his conversion to the Christian faith that he found peace. It was at the cross of Christ that he was redeemed. Only after casting his burdens on his Savior, did his soul find rest.

5. A. Explain how the advertisement industry attempts to communicate the redemptive power of the product.

Advertising promises that our concerns, struggles and problems can be alleviated by various man-made products. They say that there is no ill that a product cannot cure—even inner longings and emotional ills.

- B. Give an example of an advertisement that claims to redeem.

Your student may give any example of an advertisement from the book or from his/her own memory. The following is one example: Allstate Insurance has a commercial where people are longing for a sense of security. Colson points out that this longing is “at core, religious...” Allstate claims to give its customers inner peace and security. In return, the satisfied costumers offer their thanks to the company.

6. How did sociologist James Twitchell explain the connection between religion and advertising?

Twitchell notes that many early American advertisers were religious men; some were even the sons of pastors. Because these men were familiar with the rhetoric of religious redemption, they transferred that to their advertising schemes. Advertising became a pattern of “problem-anxiety-resolution,” much like “sin-guilt-redemption.”

7. A. Read Isaiah 53:5 and John 14:6. What is real redemption?

Real redemption is forgiveness for our sins. That is the only way to peace, security, love, freedom and eternal life. Literally, to redeem something is to buy it back, to pay for what was lost.

- B. What is the only way to this redemption?

Jesus Christ redeemed us in His work on the cross! Isaiah teaches that it is through Christ’s wounds we are healed, and *only* through His wounds. John says that the *only* way to the Father is through the Son. There is no redemption in materialism, politics, relationships, Buddhism, Mormonism, fame, fortune, health or comfort. There is only redemption through Christ.

ESSAY

Do you remember Calvin’s statement that men’s hearts are “idol factories”? In this chapter we can see how men are tempted to think of materialism as a god. Read Romans 1:18-32.

1. A. According to verses 24, 26 and 28, how does God respond to people when they reject Him for false gods?

In verse 24, God gives the ungodly over to their sinful desires. It is interesting to note that of all sins, God particularly gives them over to sexual sins. In verse 26 those sexual sins are further defined as lust and homosexual practice. In verse 28, the idolatrous are given over to a depraved mind. Without God’s saving grace, people are controlled by their sinful nature. They are “given over” to sinful desires and base thoughts and wicked actions.

- B. Now look carefully at verses 24-32. When people reject God for idols, what becomes the moral trend?

When people reject God for idols, the morality of the culture declines greatly. Total depravity blooms into a full blossom of rottenness, selfish to the core. In fact, Romans says people are filled with "...every kind of wickedness" including evil, greed, depravity, envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice, gossip, slander, homosexuality, insolence, arrogance, boasting, disobedience to parents, senselessness, heartlessness and ruthlessness. Following after their idols, those who reject the Lord "invent ways of doing evil." This phrase is especially powerful because it shows how evil the hearts of people can be. When people reject God, they not only fall prey to every temptation of the world and the devil, but also they create their own wickedness in their hearts!

2. How can you see this kind of moral trend in our society today?

Answers will vary. The following are some possible topics. Sexual promiscuity is definitely a defining characteristic of our culture as evidenced by abortion rates, sexually transmitted diseases and the social acceptance of "living together" before marriage. Pornography from television, Internet and "adult clubs" has become a huge lucrative enterprise. The institution of marriage is constantly attacked by those who wish to legalize homosexual marriage and push homosexual curriculum in American classrooms. Museums, schools, magazines and books take for granted that evolution is a fact. Advertising, self-help books and many secular counselors encourage pride, arrogance and ruthlessness. American culture disrespects authority and mocks the role of parents, choosing instead to exalt youth and flippancy. Nearly every invention and scientific discovery from the computer to atomic theory has been used for evil purposes, resulting in mass destruction of lives and minds. American schools have been plagued with student shootings and bomb threats.

3. The following is the majority opinion of the U.S. Supreme Court in *Roe v. Wade*, decided in early 1973. Read it carefully, keeping in mind the "don't-let-anyone-get-in-your-way" worldview described throughout chapter 22.

With respect to the State's important and legitimate interest in potential life, the "compelling" point is at viability. This is so because the fetus then presumably has the capability of meaningful life outside the mother's womb. State regulation protective of fetal life after viability thus has both logical and biological justifications. If the State is interested in protecting fetal life after viability, it may go so far as to proscribe abortion during that period, except when it is necessary to preserve the life or health of the mother.

This right of privacy, whether it be founded in the Fourteenth Amendment's concept of personal liberty and restrictions upon state action, as we feel it is, or, as the District Court determined, in the Ninth Amendment's reservation of rights to the people, is broad enough to encompass a woman's decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy. The detriment that the State would impose upon the pregnant woman by denying this choice altogether is apparent. Specific and direct harm medically diagnosable even in early pregnancy may be involved. Maternity, or additional offspring, may force upon the woman a distressful life and future. Psychological harm may be imminent. Mental and physical health may be taxed by child care. There is also the distress, for all concerned, associated with the unwanted child, and there is the problem of bringing a

child into a family already unable, psychologically and otherwise, to care for it. In other cases, as in this one, the additional difficulties and continuing stigma of unwed motherhood may be involved. All these are factors the woman and her responsible physician necessarily will consider in consultation.¹

A. What did the court list as their reasons for legalizing abortion?

The Supreme Court legalized abortion in 1973 citing that pregnancy could cause medical harm to the mother and that additional children could cause a “distressful life and future” or “psychological harm” to the mother. Unwanted pregnancies could tax the physical and mental health of the parents and cause “distress for all concerned.” Furthermore, unwed motherhood could be reduced or eliminated by abortion.

B. Are these reasons really caring and compassionate to the mother and the unborn child? What is really the motivation behind the reasons the court lists (hint: check page 222 of the text)?

It isn't difficult to see the gaping holes in the court's arguments. Certainly abortion can cause profound medical harm to the mother and a future life of “distress,” and “psychological harm.” The court ruled in favor of protecting a woman's right to act on her most selfish and base desires. With this ruling, parents are permitted, by law, to murder their own children in order to pursue their own happiness. Rather than encouraging self-control and personal responsibility, the court determined that women can continue to be promiscuous, and if a child gets in the way of her lifestyle, she may kill it. Rather than promoting caring intervention and support programs for teen mothers, unwed mothers and families with crisis pregnancies, the court deemed murder a legal and wise option. The heart of this decision is selfishness. As Nathanson learned at an early age, “Don't let anyone get in your way.” With the legalization of abortion, even the sweet gift of life given through children cannot get in the way of an individual's pursuit of personal happiness.

4. A. Much has changed since 1973. The legalization of abortion paved the way to discussions on infanticide and euthanasia. Now many refer to America as a “culture of death.” How is the culture of death linked to evolutionary teaching?

Society today glorifies the “don't-let-anyone-get-in-your-way” attitude. Selfish gain is promoted through popular music, movies, books, advertising, pornography and other media. Legalized abortion has encouraged this self-centered mindset, and as long as the fetus doesn't cry out for justice, it is easy to ignore its cry. Evolutionary theory teaches that people are nothing more than complex animals. We are higher forms of the ape, more-evolved beasts. If this is true, then there is no basis for the respect of human life. Furthermore, there is no basis for encouraging selfless sacrifice. “Only the fit survive, so step on anyone to get ahead,” evolution proclaims.

¹ “Roe v. Wade,” Touro Law Center, <http://www.tourolaw.edu/patch/Roe> (accessed January 31, 2006).

- B. How does a Christian worldview promote a culture of life? Use at least one Scripture passage in your answer.

Christianity is all about killing pride and developing servanthood. It's not all about you; it's about your neighbor, because it's all about Christ! Matthew 22:36-40 says that the heart of the law is love for God and love for the neighbor. That means that Christianity promotes the good of others, even if it means inconveniencing yourself. Sometimes it may mean suffering for the sake of another as did Christ. Because men are created capable of bearing the image of God, Christians respect human life—all human life, no matter how fragile (Genesis 9:6). We cannot dare to take the life of an unborn baby, because that is a person created by God with a soul, body and mind!

5. A. The Supreme Court argued in support of abortion that pregnancy and motherhood can be an inconvenience or a distress to the mother. Read 1 Timothy 2:15. Did God intend for motherhood to be a convenient pursuit of personal gain?

At the very heart of motherhood is self-sacrifice. A parent, especially a mother, gives up things for the sake of her child. For a mother, the sacrifice begins early. Her body may be tired and/or sick with pregnancy. She may be uncomfortable, emotional and tired. But for the joy of a child given of the Lord, she endures—even through the pain of giving birth. From pregnancy to grand-mothering, a Christian mother sacrifices of her time, her body, her desires and her pursuits.

- B. How do you think a Christian mother is “saved” (the Greek word here does not mean salvation from sin as in the work of Christ on the cross; this word can be understood as “restored”) through child-bearing?

The apostle's point is not that the literal act of giving birth saves a woman from sin. Rather, his point is that motherhood is representative of the sanctification process of a Christian. The Christian life is about becoming more like Christ. God changes our hearts and molds us into the image of His Son. Unlike Eve in her fall to temptation in the garden, Christ was obedient, meek, sacrificial, selfless, merciful, compassionate, truthful, loving, righteous and just. A Christian mother learns these things as she parents her children. In this way she is “restored.” She reverses the effects of the Fall by learning to be like Christ!

6. Examine your own life. Can you see ways in which you have succumbed to the allure of materialism? Has there been a time in your life when you believed the lie of redemption through materialism?

Student answers will vary. As a mentor, you may want to share with your student times in your life when the lie of materialism ensnared you.

7. The following quote is spoken by a fictional character named Gordon Gekko, an unscrupulous executive in the film *Wall Street*. Note his argument for a materialist way of life:

The point is, ladies and gentlemen, greed is good. Greed works, greed is right. Greed clarifies, cuts through, and captures the essence of the evolutionary spirit. Greed in all its forms, greed for life, money, love, knowledge, has marked the upward surge of mankind.²

- A. According to Gekko, how does greed “capture...the essence of the evolutionary spirit”?

According to evolution, only the fit survive. Only the strongest, healthiest, cleverest, most ruthless are able to rise above by stepping on the heads of others.

- B. Does greed really lead to an “upward surge of mankind”?

By greed, people are motivated to seek things without holding back. Gekko may be right that greed can motivate humans to achieve things. Many powerful, rich, inventive or famous people gained their “success” motivated by greed. However, greed doesn’t really result in anything “upward.” If anything, greed takes humanity on a downward spiral. If every person cares only for his/her gain, then culture becomes a grasping, pushing, clawing, selfish mess. For instance, legalizing abortion is an act of greed; greed for selfish pursuit. We can see how this law has caused our culture to greatly decline. Respect for human life has diminished, personal and parental responsibility has declined, while lewd and immoral behavior and a culture of death have been promoted. The end result has not been an “upward surge of mankind.”

² Internet Movie Script Database, “Wall Street,” <http://www.imsdb.com/scripts/Wall-Street.html> (accessed January 31, 2006).

DEFINITIONS

1. **Ultrasound:** the use of ultrasonic waves to produce an image of internal body structures, including a developing infant within the mother's body

Key Concepts

1. The human predicament is the rottenness of our hearts. No amount of "good" works can ever earn the favor of God. Only the redemption of Christ can bring forgiveness, righteousness and peace.
2. The practice and ideology of abortion are selfish and encourage a culture of accepted and expected narcissism. Abortion leads to a culture of death.
3. A Christian worldview encourages a culture of life and self-sacrifice.
4. Despite the alluring messages of the advertising media, material goods will never fully satisfy people's souls. Our restless souls will continually make idols until they have been satisfied by the saving grace of God.

Lesson 10

Name _____

ID# _____

HOUSING _____

INSTITUTION _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

SEARCHING FOR SALVATION THROUGH LIBERATION AND SEX

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

1. “The promise of LIBERATION is ultimately a promise of REDEMPTION .”
2. “The ESCALATOR myth reassures us that we are EVOLVING toward an earthly utopia that is the product of HUMAN effort and ingenuity.”
3. “Marxism, though largely discredited as a POLITICAL ideology, is still very much alive and well in WESTERN INTELLECTUAL life.”
4. “A BEING only considers himself INDEPENDENT when he stands on his own feet; and he only stands on his own feet when he owes his EXISTENCE to HIMSELF . But a person cannot be INDEPENDENT if he is the creation of a PERSONAL God, for then ‘he lives by the GRACE of another.’”
5. “Marxism is a substitute RELIGION that wreaks DEVASTATION and DEATH .”
6. “SEX is a VITAL part of God’s created order, a SACRED part of the marriage covenant; and our sexual nature is a GOOD gift from God. But for many modern thinkers, SEXUALITY has become... a means of REDEMPTION .”
7. “What Sanger offered was nothing less than a doctrine of SALVATION in which MORALITY is the root of all evil and free SEXUAL EXPRESSION is the path to redemption.”
8. “To liberate sex from MORALITY , Kinsey reduced sex to the sheer BIOLOGICAL act of physical orgasm.”
9. “You won’t find contemporary sex EDUCATORS using words like SALVATION ; nonetheless, many hold the same basic assumption that free SEXUAL EXPRESSION is the means to a FULL and HEALTHY life.”

10. “That’s exactly what has happened with those who look to a SEXUAL UTOPIA for fulfillment and SALVATION. BIOLOGY takes the place of God as the ultimate reality, and SEX becomes the path to the DIVINE.”

MATCHING AND SHORT ANSWER

Based upon what you have read about each of the following four individuals, match the individual with his/her well-known writings and answer the questions following each excerpt. Use each individual only once.

- A. Georg W. F. Hegel
- B. Karl Marx
- C. Margaret Sanger
- D. Alfred Kinsey

1. B “To revenge the misdeeds of the ruling class, there existed in the middle ages, in Germany, a secret tribunal, called the ‘Vehmgericht.’ If a red cross was seen marked on a house, people knew that its owner was doomed by the ‘Vehm.’ All the houses of Europe are now marked with the mysterious red cross. History is the judge—its executioner, the proletariat.”¹

Explain: Instead of God, who does this speaker propose will emancipate the poor, judge evil and punish the guilty?

Marx believed that the proletariat, the working class, were oppressed by the ruling class (the bourgeoisie). He believed that manual laborers should unite to overthrow their oppressors. The proletariat were even to act as executioners taking their own revenge on the bourgeoisie.

2. D “Nothing has done more to block the free investigation of sexual behavior than the almost universal acceptance, even among scientists, of certain aspects of that behavior as normal, and of other aspects of that behavior as abnormal. The similarity of distinctions between the terms normal and abnormal, and the terms right and wrong, amply demonstrates the philosophic, religious, and cultural origins of these concepts; and the ready acceptance of those distinctions among scientific men may provide the basis for one of the severest criticisms which subsequent generations can make of the scientific quality of nineteenth century and early twentieth century scientists.”²

Explain: Why does this author believe that he/she has to divorce himself/herself from absolute morality?

Kinsey claims that putting aside notions of right and wrong is the only way to freely investigate sexual behavior and the only way to conduct pure scientific study. He is frustrated by notions of “normal” and “abnormal” sexual behavior because they inhibit immoral experimentation. Kinsey claimed that his motive was objective research, but he also had an underlying sinful motive. As we read about Kinsey in chapter 25, it is likely that he and/or his colleagues may have molested children to obtain data. Furthermore, he and his wife practiced marital

¹ Karl Marx, “Speech at Anniversary of the *People’s Paper*.” Marxists Internet Archive, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1856/04/14.htm> (accessed March 10, 2006).

² Alfred Kinsey, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998).

infidelity as part of his “study.” Kinsey’s scientific study was nothing more than a rationalization for indulging the sinful lusts of the flesh.

3. A “Everything that from eternity has happened in heaven and earth, the life of God and all the deeds of time simply are the struggles for Mind to know itself, to make itself objective to itself, to find itself, be for itself, and finally unite itself to itself; it is alienated and divided, but only so as to be able thus to find itself and return to itself. Only in this manner does Mind attain its freedom...³ God is God, only in so far as he knows himself.”⁴

Explain: Does the author of this passage believe that God is perfect and complete?

Hegel believed that God was dynamic, evolving. In fact, he believed that the entire universe is in the process of becoming. He didn’t just believe that animals and plants were changing, he believed that men and ideas and philosophies and God were evolving. As the “Mind” finds itself through becoming, so the universe is changeable, a work in progress.

4. C “The sex instinct in the human race is too strong to be bound by the dictates of any church. The church’s failure, its century after century of failure, is now evident on every side: for, having convinced men and women that only in its baldly propagative phase is sexual expression legitimate, the teachings of the Church have driven sex under-ground, into secret channels, strengthened the conspiracy of silence, concentrated men’s thoughts upon the ‘lusts of the body,’ have sown, cultivated and reaped a crop of bodily and mental diseases, and developed a society congenitally and almost hopelessly unbalanced. How is any progress to be made, how is any human expression or education possible when women and men are taught to combat and resist their natural impulses and to despise their bodily functions?

“Humanity, we are glad to realize, is rapidly freeing itself from this ‘morality’ imposed upon it by its self-appointed and self-perpetuating masters. From a hundred different points the imposing edifice of this ‘morality’ has been and is being attacked. Sincere and thoughtful defenders and exponents of the teachings of Christ now acknowledge the falsity of the traditional codes and their malignant influence upon the moral and physical well-being of humanity.”⁵

Explain: According to this author, what is the cause of mental diseases and an unbalanced society?

Margaret Sanger believed that sexual restraint led to societal failures and personal distress. Denying oneself of sexual “expression” meant that a person might become nervous, confused, mentally ill and imbalanced. She believed that an entire society based upon the traditional sexual values of Christianity would result in an imbalanced society.

³ G.W.F. Hegel, “The Notion of the History of Philosophy,” *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, <http://www.nd.edu/mickelsen/ToC/Hegel-Hist%20of%20Phil.htm> (accessed March 10, 2006).

⁴ G.W.F. Hegel, “Hegelian Idealism: Hegel’s God,” *Moral Philosophy*, <http://www.nd.edu/Departments/Maritain/etext/jmoral09.htm> (accessed March 10, 2006).

⁵ Margaret Sanger, *The Pivot of Civilization* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger, 2004), http://swiss.csail.mit.edu/~rauch/abortion_eugenics/sanger/sanger_09.html (accessed March 10, 2006).

Explain: Based upon your knowledge of this author's personal life, did he/she live as if he/she found peace? Did sexual prowess free him/her from stress, confusion and meaninglessness?

Sanger lived a sad life full of pills, astrology and changing sexual partners. She was obsessed with psychics and numerology as she desperately grasped for meaning and order to her existence. Both of her marriages failed, and she was addicted to a painkiller. Sadly, her philosophy of sexual exploitation didn't result in the balanced life she proclaimed.

SHORT ANSWER

1. A. What is "liberation ideology"?

Liberation ideology is the belief that a particular group or culture has been oppressed by another more dominant culture and must be liberated.

B. Name two groups who identify with this ideology and tell who the supposed oppressor is for each group seeking liberation.

1. **(1) The poor working class has seen themselves as oppressed by the capitalistic rich.**
(2) Feminist women have believed that they are oppressed by patriarchal society.
(3) Homosexuals have claimed that they are oppressed by those who hold
2. **traditional Christian morals of sexuality.**
(4) Various ethnic minorities have focused on the story of their oppression by whites.

2. A. What is the Escalator Myth?

According to the Escalator Myth, "we are evolving toward an earthly utopia." This philosophy claims that the world is moving upward toward a brighter, better future.

B. How does it differ from the Christian teaching of divine providence?

Christian ideology says that history will culminate in the perfect Kingdom of God where the Lord will right wrongs and reign supreme. The Escalator Myth, on the other hand, says that mankind has the intellect and the moral capability of reaching utopia on earth.

C. How does this myth relate to liberation ideology?

Liberation ideology is basically a variation on the Escalator Myth. A group is oppressed; the group rises up and asserts its power; society improves and will eventually reach perfection.

3. A. Over the course of history, is it true that some people groups have been oppressed?

It is impossible to ignore that some people groups have, in fact, been oppressed over the course of history.

B. Should we as Christians ignore these injustices?

A Christian can hardly ignore the enslavement of Africans or the poor treatment of immigrants in American slums during the Industrial Revolution, for example. In fact, Scripture often commands that we respond.

C. What is the difference between a Christian response to injustice and liberation ideology's response?

We do not view all of history as the story of one people group's oppression. All of history is the story of God's redemption and judgment through Jesus Christ. The biblical truth of total depravity and redemption through Christ's blood alone is distorted when one group of people become the "innocent" and another people group become the "guilty."

4. Liberation ideology has even influenced the Christian church. Some have embraced a teaching called "liberation theology." According to this theology, Christ came to empower minorities, poor people and/or women. While it is true that Christ cared for the "least of these," why is an entire theology built around the concept of freedom from earthly oppression a distortion of the Gospel?

As was stated in the question, Jesus did care for children, the sick, the poor, women and Samaritans—all those who were rejected by society. However, He did this to make a spiritual point. When Jesus made the blind to see, the lame to walk and the deaf to hear, He was proving His power as God. He is Lord over all, able to heal our bodies and pardon our sins. He can make the spiritually deaf, blind and lame to hear, see and leap for joy in the forgiveness of their sins. He confronted the arrogant rich men and rulers because they believed that their earthly status made them right with God. Jesus showed them that each person has a crippled, poor, weak and dead spirit without His healing. Liberation theology attempts to eclipse the forgiveness of sins on the cross with the earthly liberation of certain people groups. However, earthly oppression pales in comparison to the oppression of the soul by sin. Jesus died on the cross to set His children free from their sins!

5. In this chapter, we saw how Marxism attempts to take the place of religion with its own beliefs and ideologies. Briefly describe the Marxist explanation for:

A. Creation

The God of Marxism is matter. Thus, "the universe is a self-originating, self-operating machine, generating its own power and running by its own internal force." In other words, creation "created" itself.

B. Garden of Eden

"Primitive communism" was the original, perfect state of creation. In this "garden of perfection" there was no such thing as private ownership of land. All was held in common, and thus there was no jealousy, covetousness, theft, injustice or oppression.

C. The Fall/Original Sin

When private ownership was established and goods were divided amongst members of the community, humanity "fell" from what Marx thought was perfection.

D. Judgment Day/Eschatology

When the proletariat rise up and vanquish the bourgeoisie, all wrongs will be made right again. According to Marxism, the end to the world's suffering will happen when those who have ruthlessly exploited the system of private ownership are cast out and the poor reestablish communal living once and for all.

6. According to Colson, why is Marxism still popular today?

Colson explains that “Marxism aims at an essentially religious need, tapping into humanity’s hunger for redemption.” As we have seen in previous chapters and will continue to see as we read on, philosophies that promise immediate and earthly redemption appeal to people. Perhaps it is another variation on Satan’s lie that we can be like God. The devil fools humanity into believing that souls do not need redemption because they are capable of fixing themselves.

7. A. According to Wilhelm Reich, what is the solution for all human dysfunction?

Essentially, Reich believed that humans need to be free to express themselves in sexual pleasure whenever they wish. He said we must develop “the capacity for surrender to the flow of biological energy without any inhibition, the capacity for complete discharge of all dammed-up sexual excitation through involuntary pleasurable contractions of the body.”

- B. Reread page 243. What has Wilhelm Reich’s “solution” led to in our society?

As Colson writes, “the tragic results of sexual licentiousness have spread across our entire society, producing epidemics of abortion, sexually transmitted diseases, and children born out of wedlock, with all the attendant social pathologies, including school problems, drug and alcohol abuse, and crime.”

8. A. On this same page, Colson provides one sure test of whether or not a worldview works with reality. What is this test?

A worldview doesn’t work if it cannot be consistently lived out.

- B. When we use this test with Sanger, Kinsey and Reich’s philosophies, do they pass? Are their worldviews livable? Why or why not?

None of the above three worldviews can be lived out. This is seen in the personal lives of Sanger, Kinsey and Reich. They each lived immoral lives that destroyed their marriages, led to depression and guilt or harmed/oppressed others.

9. Read Psalm 2:1-3. How do modern revolutionaries like Marx and Sanger reflect the kings and rulers of this passage?

In Psalm 2, the kings and rulers band together to free themselves from God’s “oppressive” chains and fetters. Marx and Sanger also claimed that they were throwing off God’s cruel and harsh moral law in order to “liberate” themselves.

10. A. In verses 4-6, how does God respond? Pay special attention to v. 4.

Basically, God scoffs at the kings and rulers because He knows that their attempts to shake His authority will never succeed! Then, He becomes angry and brings low the earthly rulers.

- B. Does rejecting the law of God really lead to freedom?

God's rule of morality and righteous living is the only way to freedom, balance, health and peace. We may reject His law and think ourselves independent, but in reality we only bring His judgment.

11. Read verses 10-12. Rather than attempting to escape from acknowledging the sovereign rule of God over our lives, what should we do?

We must "serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling." Any attempt to brush Him aside to achieve our own glory is an affront to Him who sustains our very beings in loving mercy.

ESSAY

1. A. What is the difference between repentance and the kind of revolution Marxism requires (hint: see page 234)?

Colson points out on page 234 that Marx did not call for repentance because he believed that there was nothing for which man should repent. Marx believed that man is basically good and social structures are evil. The path to redemption then necessarily involved revolution, for societal structures had to be violently overturned so that righteousness could reign.

- B. What does God require of us—repentance or revolution? Use James 4:6 in your answer.

God calls for true repentance because man's heart really is evil. Repentance is an internal change while revolution causes external changes. The path to redemption is not one of wars and revolutions and new governmental programs. Redemption is only through the blood of Christ. The Holy Spirit works repentance in the hearts of believers, convicting us of sin and enabling us to turn from evil behavior. Marxist revolution requires a spirit of pride that says, "What I believe is right, and I will get what I want no matter what it takes." Repentance, on the other hand, requires a spirit of penitence and humility. True repentance is believing that I have been wrong, and the only way I can do what is right is through the power of Christ in me. James says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Governments and kingdoms founded upon rash revolutions will eventually crumble, but a leader with a humble heart will be honored by God.

2. According to Marx in chapter 24, “A being only considers himself independent when he stands on his own feet; and he only stands on his own feet when he owes his *existence* to himself.” From your own knowledge of Scripture (**using at least 2 passages**), demonstrate that man is *not* independent.

Answers will vary. Genesis 2:7 explains that God created mankind out of the dust of the earth. God breathed life into him and then instructed him in the way he should go. Man is a creature, not a Lord. Furthermore, it wasn't just the first man who was created by God. Every person born on the earth came from the creating power of the Lord God. The Psalms are full of reminders that the Lord brought us out of our mother's wombs. Psalm 139 speaks of the Father “knitting” us together in our mother's wombs, creating each individual in the secret places of the earth. He keeps our hearts beating, our breath flowing, and all of our days are numbered by Him. Isaiah 2:22 instructs us not to trust in man “who has but a breath in his nostrils. Of what account is he?” Instead, we must trust our Creator and Sustainer. Paul instructs believers in 1 Corinthians 11:11-12 that neither man nor woman is independent of the other, “but everything comes from God.” Essentially, all of these passages clearly illustrate our humble, wholly dependent status underneath our God.

3. According to chapter 25, the idea of salvation through sex first arose from Rousseau's teaching that human nature is inherently good. How could such a belief influence the belief that sexuality saves us?

If humanity is inherently good, then the world can be made right through any number of efforts, philosophies, governments, policies or beliefs. We have read of people who tried to save humanity through destroying current social structures and through secularizing the world. We have seen other examples of salvation through materialism or science or cults. In this chapter, we read how sex promises to save by setting impulses free, ridding society of sexual “restraints” and acting upon every fleshly desire. What all these philosophies miss is the sinful heart of mankind.

We know that sex absolutely cannot save! It cannot save because humans, in their sinfulness, twist sex into a selfish, violent or abusive act. Humans are more than their sexual desires, and men and women using other men and women for their own sexual pleasure only results in empty souls.

4. In 1667, Christian poet John Milton's classic epic poem *Paradise Lost* was published. This poem tells the story of mankind's Fall through Adam and Eve, and it has been a very influential work in Western thought. Because Milton's Adam and Eve have sex after their Fall into sin, many Christians came to the conclusion that sex itself is evil, a result of the introduction of sin.

Read Ephesians 5:25-33. Then explain how a Christian should view sex. Does sex belong in or outside of marriage? What does it represent? Should it be enjoyed as a good gift of God or endured as a “duty?”

Sex is a beautiful gift of God when it is enjoyed within the boundaries God has created. Sex is meant to be enjoyed within a monogamous marriage, because marriage is a picture of the love and sacrifice between Christ and His bride, the church. Just as Christ loved us

and gave His earthly life for us, so husbands and wives give themselves to each other. All believers are unbreakably united to Christ, and in marriage a man and woman are unbreakably united. “The two become one flesh” is a picture of the sexual intimacy of husband and wife. This is not a sinful act, but a holy expression of love and unity within the marriage covenant. Sex becomes sinful when it is perverted by lust and selfish desire for pleasure that harms others.

5. We cannot achieve salvation through the body, but God did create a purpose for our physical bodies. As we learned earlier in this course, Christianity is concerned with spiritual and physical life because both the spirit *and* the body must be renewed. In the following excerpt from *Systematic Theology*, theologian Wayne Grudem explains this concept:

Paul says, “May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul *and body* be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5:23). Moreover, Paul encourages the Corinthians, “Let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of *body* and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1; cf. 1 Cor. 7:34). As we become more sanctified in our bodies, our bodies become more and more useful servants of God, more and more responsive to the will of God and the desires of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 9:27). We will not let sin reign in our bodies (Rom. 6:12) nor allow our bodies to participate in any way in immorality (1 Cor. 6:13), but will treat our bodies with care and will recognize that they are the means by which the Holy Spirit works through us in this life.⁶

- A. Describe ways in which God has sanctified you in your body. Have you given up habits or lusts?

Student answers will vary from A-C. If the student has trouble thinking of an example, feel free to share your own experiences.

- B. Have you changed your eating habits, sexual habits, time-management habits or substance-abuse habits?

- C. Has your faith caused you to set new “patterns of righteousness” in your physical life?

⁶ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994).

DEFINITIONS

1. **Proletariat:** the lowest class in the economic scale; those who must labor manually to earn a wage
2. **Bourgeoisie:** the middle class in the economic scale; those who possess the means of production and can therefore sell goods in order to earn a wage; according to Marxist theory, they do not need to manually labor, instead they employ and exploit the laboring class
3. **Transcendence:** that which surpasses physical boundaries and moves into the spiritual realm; in chapter 25, we learned that Margaret Sanger preached humanity would transcend its current lowly state through uninhibited sexual behavior and achieve divine expression

KEY CONCEPTS

1. Shifting blame for the current human condition to some external oppressor disregards original sin and our own sinful nature. This will only lead to further violence and pain as the former oppressor is vanquished and a new oppressor is installed.
2. As we learned in Lesson 5 and again in this lesson, man is *not* autonomous; he is wholly dependent upon God as the Creator and Sustainer. We can never throw off the “chains” of morality because morality is what allows us to happily function in God’s creation.
3. As our flesh is corruptible and mortal, we can never hope to achieve salvation through earthly sexual experience. Uninhibited sexual behavior will not bring redemption but only abuse and spiritual emptiness.
4. From chapter 25: “We all base our lives on some vision of ultimate reality that gives meaning to our individual existence. If we reject God, we will put something in his place; we will absolutize some part of creation.” We must take care to recognize God’s true place over our lives, otherwise we risk worshiping some created good that cannot redeem.

Lesson 11

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SEARCHING FOR SALVATION THROUGH SCIENCE

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

1. “Western culture has bought into the myth of SCIENCE as SAVIOR .”
2. “Faith in PROGRESS replaced the doctrines of CREATION and PROVIDENCE as assurance that the universe is not really purposeless.”
3. “The idea of creating a new and IMPROVED race is a key component in many forms of SCIENTIFIC UTOPIANISM .”
4. “Science itself gives no MORAL GUIDELINES for our GENETIC experimentation.”
5. “The sheer attempt to remake HUMAN NATURE genetically would strip people of their dignity and reduce them to COMMODITIES .”
6. “The faith that we can save ourselves through SCIENCE can be sustained only if we shut our eyes to the HUMAN capacity for BARBARISM .”
7. “It is assumed that humanity’s problems are not caused by wrong MORAL CHOICES but by lack of KNOWLEDGE .”
8. “Bigger and better TECHNOLOGY simply gives people bigger and better means to carry out either GOOD or EVIL choices.”
9. “Having CONFIDENCE in technology is a misguided form of SALVATION ; some things are simply not amenable to a technical QUICK FIX .”
10. “...there is no escape from the dreadful realization that a WORLD without God can END only in despair.”

SHORT ANSWER

1. According to page 246, why do many not recognize the “science as salvation” myth as a religious counterfeit?

This worldview doesn’t proclaim itself as a worldview or a religion. There are no churches, meetings, creeds or priests of science. Instead, people are fooled into believing that the myth of science as salvation is a fact, an unemotional, objective truth.

2. Name Auguste Comte’s three stages of social evolution. Explain each of these stages.

According to Comte, the stages of social evolution are, “the theological stage, where people seek supernatural explanations for events;... the metaphysical stage, where people explain the world through abstract philosophical concepts; and...the scientific stage, where people find truth through scientific experimentation.”

3. According to 1930s geneticist H. J. Muller, into what three stages is the history of the world divided?

As paraphrased by Colson, “In the first stage, life was completely at the mercy of the environment; in the second stage, human beings appeared and reversed that order, learning how to reach out and control the environment; and in the dawning third stage, humans would reach inside and control their own nature.”

4. Explain in your own words what happens to humanity in Muller’s third stage.

Basically, the third stage is the step where humanity improves itself, almost becoming its own god. In this stage, humans determine their own “flaws” and then fix them or even prevent them in their children. This could involve genetically engineering babies, chemically altering people or selectively breeding to achieve human “perfection.”

5. A. How is “salvation by science” a variation on the Escalator Myth?

The Escalator Myth tells us that, as long as the world marches on, things will get better. The world is improving, and there are things that humanity can do to move more quickly toward perfection. “Salvation by science” is an attempt to improve the world, to perfect humanity through science. In this worldview, the “escalator” moving everyone upward is science itself.

- B. According to page 248, what basic truth about change are these scientists ignoring?

These scientists are assuming that change always brings improvement. In reality, many changes do not improve the world, but harm it.

6. How do some scientists believe genetic advances will create a perfect human race?

As technology and science work to discover more about the human body, scientists discover more ways to manipulate human genes. Some of these scientists hope that one day we will be able to change an unborn baby's genetic structure to improve his/her intellect or body. Imagine parents choosing the gifts, talents and physical characteristics of their children! One parent could create a musical genius; another could make the perfect beauty model for a daughter. Or scientists could clone people. Imagine another Einstein, another Abraham Lincoln or a second copy of yourself! In some cases, this genetic manipulation may result in "eliminating" less than perfect people in the quest for "super-humanity." Colson even mentions that this genetic engineering may mean creating a "class of subhuman slaves to do our menial work."

7. According to a biblical worldview, what is wrong with this genetic engineering?

People are made capable of bearing the image of God. This means that humans—no matter their sickness, handicap or disease—have inherent worth. They are not disposable products to be manufactured or thrown away. Each person has a soul given by God. Just as abortion, infanticide and euthanasia are an offense to human dignity, so genetic engineering destroys the dignity of mankind. God alone is the author of life, creating each man or woman and breathing life into his/her unique body and mind.

8. A. According to some scientists, humanity is doomed to destroy itself unless something intervenes. From where do these scientists propose salvation will come?

Some scientists, such as Carl Sagan and Stephen Hawking, claim that extraterrestrial visitors will eventually save humanity. These creatures from another galaxy will be "friendly" and "helpful," telling us "how far we might evolve," and offering brilliant solutions to earth's social, economic and environmental issues.

- B. Is this proposal based on scientific proof?

These hopes are not pinned on scientific facts; they are nothing less than religious faith. One critic described the belief of these scientists as a "dream based on faith—a technological search for God."

ESSAY

1. Science is defined as the systematic knowledge of the physical or material world gained through observation and experimentation. Based upon this definition, how is science different from religion? Do science and religion intersect? Explain why religion—and not science—is able to give moral guidance.

Science is not synonymous with religion because science merely deals with the physical world. It is nothing more than the study of the material world; that is why when some people try to make science into a religion, salvation can only be offered by material means without a spiritual component (i.e. aliens, technology, scientific progress). However, science and religion do intersect, because every person's soul is religious. Every person knows deep down inside that there is more to being human than having flesh and blood. There are longings and emotions and experiences inside the heart of every person that can-

not be quantified and analyzed because they come from the soul. Every scientist has a soul, the seat of his/her religious inclinations. And, therefore, whether the scientist likes it or not, the soul will interfere with science. At some point, a scientist must question where the world comes from, and the answer is always religious. At some point, a scientist must determine what is moral and ethical, and the answer stems from religious conviction. Science cannot answer these questions because it is nothing more than a study, a tool used by humans. Only religion offers moral guidance, and only Christianity offers moral guidance in keeping with the holiness of God.

2. A. Is technology inherently good or inherently bad? Should Christians reject technology?

Technology itself is neither inherently good nor inherently bad. Technology is not a moral agent, but it can be used by a moral agent (a person) for good or bad purposes. Thus, it is not necessary for Christians to reject technology. As with all things, Christians must use science for the glory of God.

- B. As technology has advanced, has the result been improved morality, peace, health and resourcefulness for humanity? Or, has technology brought greater means for destruction and sin?

Technology has been used by people to bring some good improvements to the world. For instance, technology has allowed people to journey to space, improved living conditions, improved human health and medicines and improved communications. However, man, with a heart that is bent toward evil, has used technology for evil purposes as well. Technology in the hands of sinful humans has led to pornography over the Internet, weapons and bombs, devices of torture and immoral television and movies, among other things.

3. Charles S. Peirce, known as the founder of American pragmatism, wrote extensively on science and logic. In the following excerpt from one of his papers, he explains what he believes to be the “harmful limits” morality places on science:

When men begin to rationalize about their conduct, the first effect is to deliver them over to their passions and produce the most frightful demoralization, especially in sexual matters. Thus, among the Greeks, it brought about pæderasty and a precedence of public women over private wives. But ultimately the subconscious part of the soul, being stronger, regains its predominance and insists on setting matters right. Men, then, continue to tell themselves they regulate their conduct by reason; but they learn to look forward and see what conclusions a given method will lead to before they give their adhesion to it. In short, it is no longer the reasoning which determines what the conclusion shall be, but it is the conclusion which determines what the reasoning shall be. This is sham reasoning. In short, as morality supposes self-control, men learn that they must not surrender themselves unreservedly to any method, without considering to what conclusions it will lead them. But this is utterly contrary to the single-mindedness that is requisite in science. In order that science may be successful, its votaries must hasten to surrender themselves at discretion to experimental inquiry, in advance of knowing what its decisions may be. There must be no reservations.¹

¹ Charles Sanders Peirce, “Morality and Sham Reasoning,” *The Collected Papers Vol. I: Principles of Philosophy*, <http://www.textlog.de/4227.html> (accessed May 2, 2006).

Positive science can only rest on experience; and experience can never result in absolute certainty, exactitude, necessity, or universality. But it is precisely with the universal and necessary, that is, with Law, that [con]science concerns itself. Thus the real character of science is destroyed as soon as it is made an adjunct to conduct; and especially all progress in the inductive sciences is brought to a standstill.² (Brackets in original)

A. According to Peirce, why must science be divorced from morality?

Peirce believes that science must be divorced from morality because if science is “made an adjunct to conduct,” progress will be halted. Peirce believed that scientific experimentation must be allowed without reservation. However, as Christians, we believe men have souls that are accountable to God; thus we cannot allow human cloning. We believe life begins at conception, thus we cannot harvest embryos for live tissue. We believe that God created sex for the privacy and holiness of marriage, thus we cannot allow cameras and audiences to observe it “scientifically.” However, Peirce knew that if he could disconnect science from the soul, then he could pursue any “scientific” action without a guilty conscience.

4. Edward Teller, often called the father of the hydrogen bomb, worked for the U.S. nuclear weapons program during the Cold War. The following is an excerpt from a *CNN* interview conducted on March 21, 1999:

I as a scientist have two jobs, and a third job I do not have. One job is to make science, to find out what there is, to construct new things, to increase human capabilities. That is one remarkably successful thing which has been through the centuries very remarkable in its cumulative advantages.

The second job that I have is more difficult: to explain what has been found. Remarkable discoveries at the beginning of the century, like relativity and quantum mechanics, which could and should have an influence on people’s thinking altogether. [These subjects are] still not understood by the great majority of the people, even by the majority of the intellectuals. I think our second job is to explain, so that what has been found is also generally understood, and there we are falling badly behind.

The third responsibility might be to say how is it to be used, what has been found. And that responsibility I claim the scientist does not have. In a democracy kings should not make the decisions, capitalists should not make the decisions, movie stars should not make the decisions, scientists should not make them either. People in general must make the decisions, and we scientists must look to it that people understand what they are deciding about. I think our job is to increase human knowledge, human power, human understanding and make sure that the human society in general keeps up. Then it is up to the democratic society to make the right decisions.³

A. What do you think of Teller’s philosophy of science?

Given what we know about human nature, Teller’s philosophy seems like a reckless approach. Teller basically believes that scientists should be free to pursue any scientific experiment, without thought for the moral and ethical consequences. He believes that, after the experimentation is complete, people can decide whether they think it is right and whether they approve of doing it again.

² Charles Sanders Peirce, “Science as a Guide to Conduct,” *The Collected Papers Vol. I: Principles of Philosophy*, <http://www.textlog.de/4228.html> (accessed May 2, 2006).

³ Edward Teller, discussion moderated by Andy Walton, “Cold War Chat: Edward Teller,” *CNN Interactive*, <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/guides/debate/chats/teller/> (accessed May 2, 2006).

- B. Is it the scientist's responsibility to relentlessly pursue technological advances while the general citizenry sort out *how* such advances are to be used?

There are some experiments that should never be conducted. A scientist cannot lay aside morality while he/she wears his/her lab coat, because God's laws apply everywhere. What if the scientific experiment harms others (i.e. sexual abuse of women and children, harvesting organs from people, creating weapons of mass destruction, torturing people to learn about pain)? Just because scientists have the capability to create something or experiment with something doesn't mean they should.

However, all this is not to say that scientific progress should be disregarded entirely, but rather that caution should be exercised, especially when the technology has great potential to be abused. The ends should be evaluated before they are pursued, not regretted and lamented afterward.

5. The Nicene Creed, repeated by Christians for centuries, is an orthodox Christian statement of faith. This creed specifically states that Jesus Christ was "begotten, not made." The church fathers who wrote this creed were careful not to say that Jesus was created, because He is God. He is the I AM, having no beginning and no end. The word "begotten" means that Jesus proceeded from the Father, rather than being created in Mary's womb.

Usually the phrase "begotten, not made" is reserved for Jesus Christ. However, chapter 26 also mentions that people are begotten and not made. Why do you think that theologian chose that phrase to refer to people? Are people "begotten, not made" in the same way that Jesus Christ is?

To beget something or someone is to father that person or thing. The theologian mentioned in chapter 26 wanted to draw attention to the fact that people are born from the intimate act of a father and mother rather than coming out of a laboratory Petri dish. This theologian meant to point out that people are not manufactured products from a factory. However, Jesus Christ was begotten in a very different way. He did not have an earthly father, and He did not have a finite beginning. He is in the Father's bosom, in the loving intimate fellowship of the Godhead. He came forth from the Father, but the moment Mary conceived was not the moment of His creation. Unlike humans, He always was! When a man and woman have a child, they become partners with God in the creation process; they beget the child, but God *makes* the child.

6. A. Is Christianity opposed to science? Are Christianity and science completely unrelated?

Christianity is not opposed to science. In fact, many of the most famous scientists of times past have been devout Christians. Christians can greatly benefit from science, as Colson explained, "Science is a wonderful tool for investigating God's world." Furthermore, science and faith are not divorced from each other. Science can help us to learn more about our God, and Christianity can give meaning to science. But "science cannot solve the human dilemma, and it cannot give us hope and meaning." Thus, science should be viewed as the means to an end, not the end in itself.

B. How should we understand the role of science from a biblical worldview?

Science can be a part of the Christian worldview, if it is viewed as the study of what God has created, under the moral laws He set up and for the purpose of bringing Him glory and honor.

7. Read Genesis 11:1-9. How do the builders in this story compare to the contemporary scientists we read about in chapter 26?

Some contemporary scientists have attempted to replace God with technological progress; they have made science their god. The tower builders in Genesis also attempted to replace God with a man-made thing. They believed that they could build a “tower that reaches to the heavens,” where they would be like God. They tried to work salvation by their own hands, just as many modern scientists believe that they can work salvation by their discoveries, improvements, inventions or intellect. Both the Old Testament tower builders and the contemporary scientists are guilty of pride and a salvation by works.

8. What did God do to thwart the plans of men in this passage (see verses 5-9)? How does God’s reaction show that He is really in control of all things, despite the strivings of people?

The builders did not want to glorify God or elevate Him to His rightful place. Instead, they strove to elevate themselves as masters of the world. God “confused” their language so that the builders could not understand each other, and their construction was halted. He showed them that their self-proclaimed brilliant efforts were no match for His omnipotence. He gave them their ability to think, plan, make and build. But when they used these gifts for their own pursuits, God knocked them down to their rightful place. God determined that it was not time for men to unite for their own gain. And from that point onward, the world was filled with nations distinguished not only by geography, but also by language.

9. Some people search the skies for redemption from another galaxy, placing all their faith in the chance that other beings will descend to deliver us. At first, this belief may seem silly or far-fetched, but can you think of times in your life when you placed your hope in someone or something other than God?

Answers will vary. Feel free to tell your student about times when you have replaced your hope in God with hope in someone or something else.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Genetics:** the study of genes; genes are the pairs of DNA that control hereditary characteristics; when a DNA sequence is altered, the gene is mutated and, depending on which gene has been mutated, the resulting offspring may possess a mental/physical disorder; in modern science, researchers have learned how to “fix” mutated genes and even manipulate normal genes
2. **Extraterrestrial:** meaning literally, “outside of earth;” referring to any living organism from a planet other than earth
3. **Embryo:** a human in the first stage of development—from the moment the fertilized egg implants on the uterine lining until the eighth week of pregnancy

KEY CONCEPTS

1. The “science as salvation” worldview is influential in contemporary society because it promises to “fix” everything through continually improving the quality of life. We must be careful that our hope does not lie in scientific or technological progress, but in God.
2. Conducting scientific experiments and “advancing” technology without heeding the bounds of morality is a foolish pursuit that will end in harming humanity physically and spiritually.
3. People have souls; therefore, they have inherent worth. They cannot be manipulated, genetically altered, cloned or killed without destroying the sanctity of human life.
4. No matter the extent to which geneticists are able to manipulate our gene structure, they will never remove original sin.

Lesson 12

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ZIP _____

THE PROMISE OF THE NEW AGE AND THE ESCAPE OF DESPAIR

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

1. “The more the universe seems COMPREHENSIBLE, the more it also seems POINTLESS.”
2. “For many modern thinkers, the ALTERNATIVE to the Christian message of salvation is not any of the ersatz SALVATIONS we have discussed but a free fall into PESSIMISM and DESPAIR.”
3. “The CREEDS of pessimism often take on a distinctly DARWINIST cast... Moral persuasion and spiritual redemption are IRRELEVANT because we are trapped in an endless STRUGGLE to reach the top of the heap.”
4. “In the ‘RELIGION of the gene,’ SELFISHNESS is the original sin.”
5. “SOCIOBIOLOGY or evolutionary psychology itself fails a basic test of any truth claim: It is not an accurate portrayal of either human NATURE or human SOCIETY.”
6. “A universe without God is indeed IMPERSONAL, MEANINGLESS, and PURPOSELESS.”
7. “In a society reduced to sterile SECULARISM, the only response left is to look DEATH squarely in the face...and SPIT on it.”
8. “In the end, those who deny the God of the BIBLE and of HISTORY, and who find the myth of PROGRESS empty, have only two choices: They can either trivialize death by defying it or CONTROL death by embracing it on their own terms.”
9. “FINDING God will cost us our cherished AUTONOMY.”
10. “[Eastern religion] assuages the ego by pronouncing the individual DIVINE, and it gives a gratifying sense of ‘SPIRITUALITY’ without making any demands in terms of doctrinal COMMITMENT or ethical LIVING.”

11. “Spiritual evolution often reduced God to a PARTICIPANT in the process, a ‘God-in-the-MAKING,’ who was gradually evolving along with the world into full DIVINITY.”
12. “By denying the reality of SIN, [New Age religion] fails to address the crucial TRUTH of our existence—that we are FALLEN creatures prone to EVIL.”
13. “Simply KNOWING what is right doesn’t enable us to DO right.”
14. “In short, spiritual EVOLUTIONISM is not merely an error, a mistaken idea; it is religious REBELLION against reality—against the sheer fact that God is the CREATOR and we are CREATURES.”
15. “And the New Age god, who is little more than a warm FEELING within or at worst a dabbling in OCCULT powers, is merely a RATIFICATION of whatever the human EGO wants.”

MATCHING AND SHORT ANSWER

In the following section, match the author mentioned in chapter 27 or 28 with his excerpt. You will use each answer only one time. Then, in the space following each passage, respond to the author by contrasting or comparing his writing with a Christian worldview.

- A. Albert Camus
- B. Edward O. Wilson
- C. Ernest Hemingway
- D. C. S. Lewis
- E. Alfred, Lord Tennyson

1. B More pious than the average teenager, I read the Bible cover to cover, twice. But now at college, steroid-driven into moods of adolescent rebellion, I chose to doubt. I found it hard to accept that our deepest beliefs were set in stone by agricultural societies of the eastern Mediterranean more than two thousand years ago... But most of all, Baptist theology made no provision for *evolution*. The biblical authors had missed the most important revelation of all! Could it be that they were not really privy to the thoughts of God?...I drifted away from the church....

Still, I had no desire to purge religious feelings... People must belong to a tribe; they yearn to have a purpose larger than themselves. We are obliged by the deepest drives of the human spirit to make ourselves more than animated dust, and we must have a story to tell about where we came from, and why we are here. Could Holy Writ be just the first literate attempt to explain the universe and make ourselves significant within it? Perhaps science is a continuation on new and better-tested ground to attain the same end. If so, then in that sense science is religion liberated and writ large.¹

¹ Edward O. Wilson. “Consilience: Unity of Knowledge,” in CNN-Books, <http://www.cnn.com/books/beginnings/19805/consilience/> (accessed May 10, 2006).

Contrast/Compare:

Wilson proposes that science replaces traditional religion as the next step in the evolutionary process. He calls Holy Writ, “just the first literate attempt to explain the universe...” He also says that science attempts to explain the universe, but on “better-tested ground.” Wilson’s proposal is another attempt to push God aside and replace Him with mankind’s wisdom.

2. **E** Are God and Nature then at strife,
 That Nature lends such evil dreams?
 So careful of the type she seems,
 So careless of the single life;
 That I, considering everywhere
 Her secret meaning in her deeds,
 And finding that of fifty seeds
 She often brings but one to bear,
 I falter where I firmly trod,
 And falling with my weight of cares
 Upon the great world’s altar-stairs
 That slope through darkness up to God,
 I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
 And gather dust and chaff, and call
 To what I feel is Lord of all,
 And faintly trust the larger hope.
 “So careful of the type?” but no.
 From scarped cliff and quarried stone
 She cries, “A thousand types are gone:
 I care for nothing, all shall go.”
 “Thou makest thine appeal to me:
 I bring to life, I bring to death:
 The spirit does but mean the breath:
 I know no more.” And he, shall he,
 Man, her last work, who seemed so fair,
 Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
 Who rolled the psalm to wintry skies,
 Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,
 Who trusted God was love indeed
 And love Creation’s final law—
 Though Nature, red in tooth and claw
 With ravine, shrieked against his creed—
 Who loved, who suffered countless ills,
 Who battled for the True, the Just,
 Be blown about the desert dust,
 Or sealed within the iron hills?
 No more? A monster then, a dream,
 A discord. Dragons of the prime,
 That tare each other in their slime,
 Were mellow music matched with him.
 O life as futile, then, as frail!
 O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
 What hope of answer, or redress?
 Behind the veil, behind the veil.²
 (Hint: In the first and fifth stanzas, “type” means species.)

² Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “In Memoriam A. H. H.,” Web-Books
<http://www.webbooks.com/Classics/Poetry/anthology/Tennyson/InMemoriam.htm> (accessed May 10, 2006).

Contrast/Compare:

Tennyson simply cannot accept a God of love who is also in control, especially when nature seems so violent, “red in tooth and claw.” In his view, nature begins with a capital “N,” competing with God for control of the universe. Instead of the God of the Bible who controls nature, speaking the world into existence and calming storms with His Word, Tennyson believes that God is a co-equal of nature. His god is not the God of Christianity, but a helpless god of love who cannot control the raw elements. Tennyson’s god did not create men and women and does not control their destruction either (as implied in the sixth and seventh stanzas). In contrast with the Christian message of hope and truth, Tennyson’s conclusion is fatalistic. He exclaims in the end, “O life as futile, then, as frail!”

3. C I had gone to no such place but the smoke of cafés and nights when the room whirled and you needed to look at the wall to make it stop, nights in bed, drunk, when you knew that that was all there was, and the strange excitement of waking and not knowing who it was with you, and the world all unreal in the dark and so exciting that you must resume again unknowing and not caring in the night, sure that this was all and all and all and not caring.³

Contrast/Compare:

Hemingway illustrates the mindset of a man living for the moment, entrenched in his own hedonism. He cannot make any sense of his life; he does not see any purpose in it all. His conclusion is to live it up—“eat, drink and be merry.” After living a life like that, the only thing Hemingway had not experienced was death. Since he was “sure that this was all and all and all and not caring,” he ate and drank and was merry, and then he died—at his own hand.

4. A As for this myth, one sees merely the whole effort of a body straining to raise the huge stone, to roll it and push it up a slope a hundred times over; one sees the face screwed up, the cheek tight against the stone, the shoulder bracing the clay-covered mass, the foot wedging it, the fresh start with arms outstretched, the wholly human security of two earth-clotted hands. At the very end of his long effort measured by skyless space and time without depth, the purpose is achieved. Then Sisyphus watches the stone rush down in a few moments toward that lower world whence he will have to push it up again toward the summit. He goes back down to the plain. It is during that return, that pause, that Sisyphus interests me.

All Sisyphus’ silent joy is contained therein. His fate belongs to him. His rock is his thing. Likewise, the absurd man, when he contemplates his torment, silences all the idols. In the universe suddenly restored to silence, the myriad wondering little voices of the earth rise up. Unconscious, secret calls, invitations from all the faces, they are the necessary reverse and price of victory. There is no sun without shadow, and it is essential to know the night. The absurd man says yes and his effort will henceforth be unceasing. If there is a personal fate, there is no higher destiny, or at least there is but one which he concludes is inevitable and despicable. For the rest, he knows himself to be the master of his days. At that subtle moment when man glances backward over his life, Sisyphus returning toward his rock, in that silent pivoting he contemplates that series of unrelated actions which becomes his fate, created by him, combined under his memory’s eye and soon sealed by his death. Thus, convinced of the wholly human origin of all that is human, a blind man eager to see who knows that the night has no end, he is still on the go. The rock is still rolling.

³ Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* (New York: Scribner, 1995).

I leave Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain! One always finds one's burden again. But Sisyphus teaches the higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises rocks. He too concludes that all is well. This universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night-filled mountain, in itself forms a world. The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy.⁴

Contrast/Compare:

Hemingway proposes hedonism, while Camus proposes becoming the god of your own universe, but both men deny the truth. Camus elevates man to the place of the master of the universe, claiming that through consciousness of his futility, man fully comprehends the universe. It doesn't matter to Camus that Sisyphus is caught forever in a meaningless existence, always striving and never achieving, because Sisyphus knows that there is no master of the universe. There is just his rock and him.

This perspective is blatantly ignorant. Camus chooses to ignore the obvious. Sisyphus is not the god of his own universe, because he cannot control his life or the results that his actions produce. Instead, he chooses to tell himself that he is God. There is no peace and no true joy in this belief. There is no redemption, no meaning and no purpose to life. This over-simplified view removes any notion of a transcendent Creator beyond our imaginings and makes our lives worthless.

5. **D** Since, on the modern view, the final stage of anything is the most refined and civilised stage, this "religion" is held to be a more profound, more spiritual, and more enlightened belief than Christianity. Now this imagined history of religion is not true. Pantheism certainly is (as its advocates would say) congenial to the modern mind; but the fact that a shoe slips on easily does not prove that it is a new shoe—much less that it will keep your feet dry. Pantheism is congenial to our minds not because it is the final stage in a slow process of enlightenment, but because it is almost as old as we are. It may even be the most primitive of all religions... Pantheism is in fact the permanent natural bent of the human mind; the permanent ordinary level below which man sometimes sinks, under the influence of priestcraft and superstition, but above which his own unaided efforts can never raise him for very long...It is the attitude into which the human mind automatically falls when left to itself...Modern philosophy has rejected Hegel and modern science started out with no bias in favour of religion; but they have both proved quite powerless to curb the human impulse toward Pantheism. It is nearly as strong today as it was in ancient India or in ancient Rome... yet, by a strange irony, each new relapse into this immemorial "religion" is hailed as the last word in novelty and emancipation.⁵

Contrast/Compare:

Lewis, a devout Christian, understood that man naturally tends to replace the God of the Bible with gods from other religions or from our own minds. Lewis also recognizes that men tend to think their religion is new, more developed or fresh. In reality, pantheism is the oldest, most worn-out and common religion. It is idolatry; even the term "New Age" is a misnomer because it is the old lie of Satan that you can be like God. That is why Lewis calls pantheism "almost as old as we are."

⁴ Albert Camus, "The Myth of Sisyphus." Hanover College, <http://history.edu/courses/excerpts/111Camus.html> (accessed May 11, 2006).

⁵ C.S. Lewis, *Miracles* (San Francisco: Harper 2001).

SHORT ANSWER

Read the following quotes from chapter 27.

“The world is all there is, our existence is all we have.”

“You are your life, and that’s all you are.”

1. A. Can you name the worldview behind these statements?

Existentialism

- B. Explain this worldview in your own words.

Existentialism claims that life is absurd and meaningless. The life that you experience, your physical existence, is all there is. Since what you experience is the only reality, each individual must create his/her own meaning.

2. In your own words, explain the meaning of the terms “anti-hero” and “anti-faith” (see page 253 of *How Now Shall We Live?*).

Instead of a hero who is valiant, virtuous and strong, the anti-hero is an unscrupulous villain or a sniveling weakling. However, he is still the main character of the story, the one who you watch most closely, and the one with whom the audience identifies. In similar manner, an anti-faith is not a pious, religious belief in something firm and unchanging. Instead, it is a faith that stands for everything that is the opposite of faith. It is the faith that there is no faith; therefore, we must make our own meaning out of life.

3. How does social Darwinism, or sociobiology, attempt to justify human greed and ambition?

Social Darwinism is merely the “human value” application of survival of the fittest, Darwinism’s principal tenet. If only the strongest and most cunning survive, then it only makes sense that every human is programmed to watch out only for him/herself. Hence, Colson writes, “the rich and corrupt are in power because they’ve proven themselves the ‘fittest’ in the struggle for survival and...there’s nothing we can do about it because it’s simply the law of nature.” In this worldview, selfishness is excused as part of the necessary struggle of every being to exist.

4. According to sociobiology, what are the characteristics of human genes?

According to sociobiology, genes are the guiding principles of men. Supposedly, they are pre-programmed to do whatever it takes to ensure their survival. By nature, they are entirely self-centered. Genes use our bodies as vessels to transcend time and achieve immortality by reproducing themselves. Sociobiology almost personifies human genes, turning them into beings with wills and plans for their own gain.

5. According to chapter 28, how did the West become fascinated with Eastern religions and philosophies?

Answers will vary as the text cites several factors. Make sure answers come from the reading. When wars struck and things in the world took a turn for the worse, people began to lose their optimism in science and progress. As optimism turned sour, it didn't appear that technology or the eternal progress of mankind would bring salvation. People began to look to other cultures for answers. Western religion (primarily Christianity) had already been abandoned in the wake of scientific progress, and there was nowhere else to look but to the East. As Colson writes, "Western thought is analytical, leading to fragmentation and alienation. Eastern thought is holistic, promising healing and wholeness. Western science has destroyed the environment and polluted the air. Eastern pantheism proffers a new respect for nature." It seemed to people that the East did things differently, it was a fresh perspective, and it seemed new. Thus, the New Age movement was born.

6. Is New Age religion really new? Explain your answer.

Hollywood actors, famous figures and the American public alike have fled to New Age philosophy. It seems chic, fresh and exciting. The truth is that it is an old lie in a new box. It is re-packaged Eastern religion with beliefs like karma, reincarnation and the power of positive thinking; and with practices like meditation, holistic health and prayer rituals. The lie of New Age religion is so old that it dates back to the Garden of Eden. It is nothing more than the lie of Satan: you can be like God.

7. What is the main difference between the pseudo-god of the New Age movement and the God of the Bible?

The God of Scripture is both personal and all-powerful. He is a creator and a sustainer and a comforter. Salvation is through Him alone. On the other hand, New Age religion really doesn't have a true God, but a life force, an energy source. The God of Scripture requires obedience and worship; the god of the New Age movement is nothing more than an impersonal force you can tap into for power. Thus the main difference is that the false god of the New Age movement doesn't offer relationship, communion or covenant with its followers, while the God of Scripture draws near to us, bringing us into His family and calling us His children and friends.

8. In the PUMSY curriculum, the term "Clear Mind" is a cover-up for whom or what? Summarize what the PUMSY curriculum teaches.

Clear Mind is a cover-up for the Hindu god Brahma. Basically, the PUMSY curriculum teaches the principles of New Age religion to young schoolchildren. Children learn to meditate, tap into their inner-strength and make themselves gods through positive thinking and recognizing their inner divinity.

ESSAY

1. Why is the New Age god unable to save us?

The New Age god is an impersonal being or force. It isn't a person; you cannot communicate with it; it doesn't promise anything but perpetual "energy" if you can tap into it. Such a being or thing cannot save anyone because it has no real power over situations or people. It is nothing but an energy source. Furthermore, the New Age god doesn't recognize what people need to be saved from—sin. Instead, followers of this religion are encouraged to believe in themselves or to become "one" with their surroundings. The god of the New Age religion can't save us from what really ails the world because sin will not go away by meditation or healthy eating or prayers to an impersonal force.

2. A. Carefully read John 4:1-27. How did Jesus go out of his way to talk to this woman? Was she surprised that He talked to her?

Jesus went out of His way by traveling through Samaria and stopping at Jacob's well in a town called Sychar. When He arrived in the town, He did not follow His disciples to get food; He had another motive for this visit. Contrary to the cultural practices of His time, Jesus chose to show attention to a woman—and a Samaritan woman at that! Neither of these things was acceptable at that time for a Jewish man, especially not for a teacher.

- B. How did He move the conversation from mundane chitchat to a spiritual discussion?

Jesus wanted to talk to her about the state of her heart, so He used their surroundings to lead into a spiritual discussion. They were at a well, so He asked for a drink. When she marveled that He would ask her for a drink (since she was a Samaritan), Jesus told her she should have asked Him for a drink! The woman thinks that Jesus spoke of literal water, and Jesus explained that the water He offers is of eternal life. He used questions and familiar illustrations to lead into a spiritual conversation.

- C. What did He do to show her that religion and morality are inextricably linked?

The woman still did not understand; she thought that if she drank of Jesus' water, she would never have to come to draw of the well. But Jesus meant that she would no longer be thirsty for love and meaning; she would no longer go from partner to partner seeking fulfillment. So Christ told her to go call her husband. He then told her that He knew she was living in adultery. She couldn't hide her sin from Him, and she knew that she was in the presence of a prophet. She tried several times to divert the conversation to arguments about religious matters (the Samaritan possession of Jacob's well, worshiping at the mountain or in Jerusalem), but Christ showed her that these arguments mean nothing if your life isn't morally pure before Him.

3. A. Can you think of someone you know who has been influenced by New Age religion or fatalism?

Answers will vary from A-C. You may want to suggest Scripture passages to help your student approach this person. You may also suggest questions your student could ask, or topics your student could bring up to lead into a conversation about the Gospel.

- B. How do you think you could talk to that person to share the Gospel with him/her?

- C. Does the passage in John help you to think of how to approach an unbeliever with the Gospel?

DEFINITIONS

1. **Autonomy:** complete independence
2. **Transcendence:** existence above and beyond the limits of material experience
3. **Pantheism:** the doctrine or belief that God consists of the universe and its phenomena; God is in everything, and everything is God
4. **Occult:** a religion that relates to or deals with supernatural influences, agencies or phenomena; often involving spiritualism, Satan worship or demonic influences
5. **Postmodernism:** a worldview that sees all beliefs, religions and attitudes as equally valid; there is no absolute truth; everything is relative

KEY CONCEPTS

1. When optimistic hope in humanity failed, people turned to fatalism or Eastern religion for a new answer to old questions. Fatalism led to despairing depression or hedonistic practice, while New Age religion made gods of humans. Neither answer satisfies the longings of the souls of people.
2. There is nothing new about the New Age. It is ancient Eastern philosophy repackaged. New Age religion is basically pantheism, the belief that God is in everything, and everything is God. This religion appeals to people because it is the old lie of Satan: you too can be like God!
3. Only Christianity offers meaning and peace in this life. As Christians, we do not need to despair, and we do not need novel religious practices. Scripture is the Word of God at all times and in all circumstances.

Lesson 13

Name _____

ID# _____

HOUSING _____

INSTITUTION _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

REAL REDEMPTION

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

1. “Modern PLURALISTIC society provides a smorgasbord of WORLDVIEWS and belief SYSTEMS , all clamoring for our ALLEGIANCE .”
2. “By lining up the CHRISTIAN faith against other WORLDVIEWS and religions...we see with astonishing clarity that CHRISTIANITY offers the only real answers to the most basic QUESTIONS of life and the best understanding of how we can be SAVED .”
3. “The second person of the TRINITY became a HUMAN BEING , lived a perfect life of OBEDIENCE to the moral order, and in his death paid the PRICE for our violation of the moral law, satisfying the demands of divine JUSTICE .”
4. “All the IDEOLOGIES we’ve examined in this section are pallid IMITATIONS of the CHRISTIAN GOSPEL .”
5. “Clinging to the beauty of the gospel’s HOPE but wanting none of the gospel’s REQUIREMENTS , they recast it as the ESCALATOR myth, a fallacy of progress, promising that we can create new life through POLITICS , SEX , SCIENCE , or EASTERN spirituality.”
6. “During the TWO THOUSAND years since CHRIST’S resurrection, the historical VALIDITY of this event has withstood every imaginable ASSAULT , ranging from the charge of a ‘cover up’...to modern claims that it was a ‘ PASSOVER plot’ or a ‘conjuring TRICK with bones.”
7. “This defeated band of men [Jesus’ disciples], who had already returned to their fishing nets and boats, would never have been TRANSFORMED into the bold PREACHERS of the gospel and defenders of the FAITH had they not seen Jesus’ RESURRECTED body and known Him to be the living GOD .”

8. “People will DIE for something they BELIEVE to be true, but they will never die for something they know to be FALSE .”
9. “But we now know that the NEW TESTAMENT books were originally written a few decades after Christ’s RESURRECTION —far too short a period for LEGENDS to develop.”
10. “The salvation attested to in the New Testament is the culmination of a long process of PREPARATION in the Old TESTAMENT , which is also historically reliable, as ARCHAEOLOGICAL discoveries continue to CONFIRM .”
11. “God’s redemption, then, does not CHANGE us into something DIFFERENT so much as it RESTORES us to the way we were ORIGINALLY created.”
12. “Only CHRISTIANITY provides true REDEMPTION —a restoration to our CREATED state and the hope of eternal peace with God...No other WORLDVIEW can set free a tormented SOUL .”
13. “Having been LIBERATED from sin, we are EMPOWERED to help bring CHRIST’S restoration to the entire CREATION order.”

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. The Bible is supported by C .
 - a. eschatological evidence
 - b. Maccabean evidence
 - c. archaeological evidence
 - d. ideological evidence
 - e. all of the above
2. All worldviews attempt to offer some sort of B .
 - a. finance
 - b. salvation
 - c. love
 - d. intellect
 - e. all of the above
3. Christianity offers the only answer to the problem of D .
 - a. global warming
 - b. war
 - c. world hunger
 - d. sin
 - e. none of the above

4. All the worldviews and ideologies examined in *How Now Shall We Live?* are poor imitations of **C** .
 - a. modern culture
 - b. ancient culture
 - c. Christianity
 - d. Eastern religions
 - e. all of the above

5. Since it is humans who commit sin, only a(n) **B** can pay the penalty for sin.
 - a. god
 - b. human
 - c. animal
 - d. good deed
 - e. none of the above

6. We are **D** in the hands of a(n) **D** God.
 - a. lovers, loving
 - b. humans, suffering
 - c. finite, impersonal
 - d. sinners, righteous
 - e. all of the above

7. The resurrected Christ appeared to **A** .
 - a. 500 eyewitnesses
 - b. David Koresh
 - c. Joseph Smith
 - d. Muhammad
 - e. all of the above

8. The words the Bible commonly uses to describe God's salvation for humanity imply **E** .
 - a. regeneration
 - b. redemption
 - c. renewal
 - d. restoration
 - e. all of the above
 - f. none of the above

9. William Albright writes that every New Testament book was written between **B** .
 - a. 200 and 300 A.D.
 - b. 40 and 80 A.D.
 - c. 1,000 and 2,000 A.D.
 - d. 1,509 and 1,564 A.D.
 - e. none of the above

10. Mohandas Gandhi explicitly stated that he did not care if Jesus Christ **D** .
 - a. was married
 - b. died on the cross
 - c. cast out demons
 - d. ever lived
 - e. all of the above

SHORT ANSWER

1. When you compare Christianity with other worldviews and belief systems, what sets Christianity apart?

Christianity answers the basic questions of life and explains how we might truly be saved. Your student may choose to mention any of the following: Christianity's teaching on sin, grace, forgiveness, a personal God, the incarnation or morality. There may be other things that your student points out. Make sure that his/her answer is scriptural and reflects what we have studied thus far.

2. According to the Christian worldview, what is the human dilemma/problem?

The human problem is moral; it is the sinful heart of man. We are all guilty of sin before a moral, holy, perfect, unblemished God. Left on our own, our sin continues to distort the world, destroy relationships and ravage the earth. The solution cannot be found in new ideologies or government programs or religions. Every one of us has sinned and fallen short of God's perfect and holy standard, and as a result, we are alienated from God. We all face His wrath—that is the human problem.

3. In your own words, explain God's plan of salvation from the human problem.

Because humanity is sinful by nature, people cannot perfectly fulfill God's law. Every man stands under God's judgment, guilty of transgressing His commands. No human could ever fix the problem, because we all have the same nature. Only a sinless human could fulfill God's law, but only God could forgive the infinite sins of His children. Because God is merciful and loving and forgiving, He sent His Son in human flesh. Jesus Christ was born fully God and fully human, yet without a sinful nature. Thus, He could perfectly fulfill the law of God. But He didn't just obey the law; He also took on the sins of His children. Even though He was sinless, He chose to pay the penalty for our sin—not only death on the cross, but also rejection from His beloved Father.

4. How does the Old Testament point to the redemption of Christ in the New Testament?

The entire Old Testament—from the law to the prophets to the poetry and stories of the saints—is a picture of the redemption of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament is full of types and shadows pointing to the cross. For instance, the Jewish laws, the year of Jubilee, the sacrifices, the kinsman redeemer, the temple and tabernacle—all are pictures of the redemption of Christ. The saints of the Old Testament looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, and the saints after the New Testament look back on Him. All of His children put their faith in the same person. The Old Testament told us how He would come, what He would do and how the believers should prepare for His coming.

5. A. What Old Testament passage prophesying of Christ's death is mentioned in this lesson's reading?

Psalms 22 prophesies of Christ's death in striking detail. For instance, this passage mentions the piercing of His hands and feet and the casting of lots for His garments.

- B. Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, what did skeptics say about this passage?
Skeptics used to say that there was no way Psalm 22 could have been written prior to the Maccabean period because crucifixion was not invented until that time period.
- C. What did the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls prove?
However, when the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, they contained Psalm 22, and they were dated before the Maccabean period. Thus, the scrolls prove the veracity of Scripture once again.
6. Summarize the promise of redemption for each of the following:
- A. Commercialism
Commercialism promises that more stuff will bring happiness, peace and security. Every product promises to cure your ills, restore you to health, bring back your youth and vitality, improve your life and set you at ease. Commercialism says that the goal is to achieve personal peace through products.
- B. Neo-Marxism
In this worldview, every fragment of society is oppressed by someone or something. For instance, blacks are oppressed by whites, women by men, the poor by the rich and homosexuals by heterosexuals. This so-called oppression is what defines the human problem. The path to redemption is through breaking free and asserting independence from the oppressor.
- C. Sexual liberation
This worldview says that the human problem all goes back to sexual repression. If you can set free your sexual urges and fantasies, then you can achieve inner peace and freedom. Sexual experiences become pseudo-worship experiences.
- D. Science and technology
Science promises to bring humanity upward. Technological inventions will solve world hunger and fix environmental issues, while scientific progress will improve our genes, heal our intellectual shortcomings and discover the source of the world's problems. In this worldview, the root of the world's problems is scientific ignorance. Once we discover how to fix everything, the world will be redeemed!
- E. The New Age
This worldview promises redemption through a mixture of Eastern religions. Humanity will be free from sin and pain once every individual realizes his/her inner divinity. Through prayer and meditation, positive thinking and certain exercise rituals, humanity can find a peace and guidance from within.

ESSAY

1. Based on your reading, what other historical and archaeological discoveries confirm the veracity of the Old Testament?

First, skeptics thought that Moses could not have written the first five books of the Bible (the Pentateuch) because writing had not been developed at that time. Then archaeologists discovered that writing had been developed thousands of years before the time of Moses. “The Egyptian and Babylonian cultures were highly literate cultures, with dictionaries, schools, and libraries,” writes Colson.

Second, critics once said that the early chapters of Genesis contained false legends because they disbelieved the historical facts recorded in the book. For example, critics denied the existence of certain cities, roads and customs. However, recent archaeological discoveries have revealed that Genesis records extremely accurate accounts of trade routes, cities, customs and names of ancient places. Ancient tablets have also been found with records of the names of Abraham and his brothers as well as peculiar customs of his day (such as using servant girls to bear children). However, these customs completely disappeared a few centuries after Abraham’s time.

Third, archaeologists discovered unique Philistine temples that were supported by two pillars set six feet apart. This discovery backs up the Judges story of Samson’s destruction of the Philistine temple by pushing down two pillars with his arms.

Fourth, the ancient city of Jericho, from the book of Joshua, has been uncovered. This discovery revealed that the city had been knocked down in a strange manner. The walls of the city lay outward and flat, providing a perfect ramp for an invading army such as Joshua’s.

Finally, critics used to deny the existence of King David since his name was not recorded anywhere outside of the Bible. However, a 1993 archaeological dig in Israel uncovered rock fragments reading “the House of David.”

2. What proofs that Christ did indeed rise from the dead are found in your reading?

The empty tomb was an observed, historical fact. Some of Jesus’ disciples witnessed it, as did the soldiers sent to guard Jesus’ tomb. The resurrected Christ then appeared to 500 witnesses. Colson writes, this is “too many people to dismiss the accounts as mass hysteria or the power of suggestion.” Moreover, Jesus’ disciples refused to renounce Him, even though they were tortured and killed for their faith. These men would have never been able to endure such persecution if they had made up a lie about Jesus’ resurrection. Instead, they must have been fully convinced that Jesus rose from the dead and was the true salvation from hell, sin and death. As Colson writes, “People will die for something they believe to be true, but they will never die for something they know to be false.”

3. Read Matthew 27:62-28:15 and 1 Corinthians 15:3-6, and then write about what Christ's resurrection from the dead means to you personally.

Answers will vary. In your letter to your student, you may want to share the hope, comfort, excitement or assurance Christ's resurrection brings to you.

4. Based on chapter 29, what *feeling* do many people lack when they think of God? Why do many people lack this feeling? Is this merely a feeling or a necessary realization? What *causes* this feeling and why is it necessary?

Many people lack a feeling of guilt before God because they are indoctrinated to believe that guilt is a false self-image, a neurosis resulting from a bad childhood experience. In our culture, people are told to feel good about themselves, believe in themselves and love themselves. However, guilt is a necessary realization. It is more than a feeling; it is knowing that you are not right before God, that you have transgressed His law, that you are guilty of sin. How can a Christian claim to be "saved" if he/she does not know what he/she is saved from? The guilt that comes from the Holy Spirit is conviction for sin. It is the acknowledgment of transgressing God's law and the sorrow that comes from that knowledge. This knowledge and this sorrow cause a Christian to cast him/herself before the throne of God asking for mercy from God's wrath and forgiveness for offending God. Guilt is necessary because salvation is about forgiveness from sin and guilt!

5. The Old and New Testaments use the words *redeem*, *reconcile*, *renew*, *regenerate* and *restore* when explaining Christian salvation. What does each of these words individually imply? In other words, what is the connotation of each word?

To redeem implies buying something back, like paying off a debt or paying the ransom for someone kidnapped. Something redeemed is restored to freedom. To reconcile implies a relationship broken in conflict that is returned to its original state. To renew implies returning something that has been beaten-up and torn to its initial pure condition. To regenerate implies restoring something to life again, taking something that was dead and causing it to be reborn. To restore implies returning something to the way it was originally created to be, taking something that was lost or spoiled and returning it to its original beauty.

6. We have mentioned proofs that the Bible is historically accurate and true. John Calvin, a sixteenth century Christian theologian, speaks of what he thinks is the best proof that the Scriptures are reliable and from God. He wrote, “It is neither by our own judgment nor by that of other men that we believe the Scripture to be from God. The Holy Spirit makes us certain that God himself speaks to us in Scripture having chosen men as writers.” He also writes, “In the Scripture the highest argument is: ‘Thus says the Lord.’”¹

A. What do you think he means by these statements?

This concept is mentioned in other lessons as well. All the proofs in the world—indisputable evidence, logical arguments and historical facts—cannot convince a person of the truth of the Bible in a saving manner. Only the Holy Spirit working in the heart of a man or woman can bring salvation. Furthermore, as strong as proofs may be, the testimony of the Holy Spirit within us is the most powerful. Facts and proofs may help believers to bolster their faith, but as Calvin points out, God Himself moves us to believe the Holy Bible is reliable and true.

B. Do you agree with his statements? Why or why not?

No matter what arguments and proofs we can find from history, science or archeology, the witness of the Holy Spirit within us is the strongest argument. Furthermore, the Bible itself says that the Bible contains the Word of God for humanity. An example of this is found in the often-repeated phrase, “Thus says the Lord.” Since God is completely sovereign, He has made sure that the Bible is presented to humanity in its proper form, and His Spirit testifies to this in our hearts and souls.

¹ John Calvin, *Biblical Christianity*, ed. J.K. Davies (London: Grace, 1997).

DEFINITIONS

1. **Eschatology, eschatological:** the doctrine of last things such as death, resurrection, the end of time, the second coming of Christ and the final judgment
2. **Pluralism:** a multiplicity of backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities; often implying the policy or belief that there are numerous worldviews, beliefs or religions that are all valid at the same time
3. **Ideology:** the doctrines, opinions or beliefs of a person or group of people—the same basic meaning as worldview
4. **Fallacy:** a false or mistaken idea, teaching, opinion or argument

KEY CONCEPTS

1. “Only Christianity provides true redemption—a restoration to our created state and the hope of eternal peace with God. No other worldview identifies the real problem: the stain of sin in our souls. No other worldview can set free a tormented soul...like me and you.”
2. Christ forgives His children despite their selfishness and sin. It is a work of grace, for there is nothing man can do to merit His favor. He is pleased with our sorrow for sin and true repentance, and He always forgives us. He paid the full price for our sin by His death and suffering on the cross after an obedient life as a man.
3. Every religion, worldview and ideology promises some kind of redemption. Without Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, all those promises are empty and meaningless. Redemption is absolutely and only through Christ.
4. Christianity is a logical religion that is supported by the evidence of observed and recorded history, archaeological findings and science. Yet only the Holy Spirit working within the heart of a person can bring a sinner to repentance and faith.



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