

Video 1: Worldviews: Introduction

[Keith]

Hi, I'm Keith Shull, the executive director of the Arizona Christian Worldview Institute in Phoenix Arizona. You may be wondering Why do I even need to bother with all this worldview stuff? But over the course of your lifetime, you're going to meet a lot of people with a wide variety of viewpoints and positions and different beliefs. It's always good to understand where they are coming from and what they believe. I'll be here to present the perspective of the other worldviews.

[Ryan]

Hi, my name is Ryan Nuñez. I'm the executive Pastor of the Palm Valley Church in Goodyear Arizona. In this course we're going to be talking about our worldview. Worldview is the basic beliefs that you have about, about the world around us. Now these things are so basic, a lot of the times we don't even really think about it, but they shape so many of the decisions we make. Some of the decisions are as simple as the type of music we listen to, the movies you go watch, but they also effect important decisions in life about marriage and family. During this course, you're going to understand what your worldview is and you're also going to begin to uncover what some of the other worldviews are in the world around us.

Video 2: Worldviews: Money, Work and Career

[Keith]

Worldviews have consequences in the decisions that people make every day. As people in the real world, naturalists and Christians, make the same types of decisions. For this module, we'll compare Christianity and naturalism in the spheres of money, work, and career. Sometimes the end results will be simpler, even identical, but the bases for those decisions will be completely different.

[Ryan]

<The Christian view on money>

My worldviews as it relates to finances, career, money is based on uh what God instructs in the book of Deuteronomy. He says not to become proud or concerned with, with what you've accomplished because you haven't done it, it's what God has given us the ability to do. He is the one that gives us the ability to produce wealth; he's the one who has given us the gifts. So when it comes to what I want to do in my life, I'm really just the manager of what he's given me and that's how I want to operate in these areas of my life.

[Keith]

<The Naturalist view on money>

The naturalists answer to that question would be that since there is no God, then whatever I've accomplished, I've done on my own and I deserve everything I've got. Yeah I've gotten some help here and there from other people, but that's not the same as attributing my success to some supernatural being. Now, a related question would be, does the choice of a career fulfill some sort of calling or gift of any kind.

[Ryan]

<The Christian view on career>

Since I was created by God, he's given me special gifts and abilities to use and he expects me to use as a good manager of what God has given me. I want to make sure that, that my career falls in line with what God has given me to do. <Matthew 25: 14-30> And Jesus tells a parable in Mathew chapter 25 about a master who has given his servants some resources to manage and one servant is so worried about upsetting his master that he just buries it in the ground and does nothing with it. The other two invest it and turn a profit for their master and the master comes back and he is so upset with that one servant that just buried it, he just squandered away. God has given us gifts that he wants us to use and that's how I view my life and my talents.

[Keith]

<The Naturalist view on career>

First the naturalists treats evolution as a given. The logical conclusion of this is that mankind came about as a random accident of atoms. Therefore, life itself is random; and if it's random, then it's purposeless; and if life is purposeless, so is our labor. Secondly, the naturalist view of career is based on the belief that this life is all there is. Survival is all that really matters. We work so that we can meet our basic needs of food and shelter. The naturalists also believe in using talents in a career like the Christian, but they aren't considered gifts given by God since they don't believe that God exists. Talents are a combination of genetics, personal interests, training, and practice. Of course, one of the most basic reasons we work is to earn money, to provide for our families. For the person with the Christian worldview, is the accumulation of wealth right or wrong?

[Ryan]

<The Christian view on career>

The accumulation of wealth, in itself, isn't right or wrong; it's my attitude towards it that matters. In 1st Timothy, chapters 6, Paul is warning Timothy, his protégé, he's saying, "do not let the love of money become too important." It's that love of money. Is money becoming more important than other things in my life? Is it becoming more important than my love of God? Possessions in themselves aren't wrong, money in itself isn't wrong, property isn't wrong, but if they're more important than my relationship with God, then that's wrong and that's what I need to watch out for.

[Keith]

<The Naturalist view on financial morality>

Well, the naturalist would say that only the individual can determine right and wrong for themselves. There are no external standards of what's right and wrong. So to even ask the question is almost meaningless. You can only answer the questions for yourself. For example, you might say, "In this situation, for me and for me alone, this use of money is moral" or "In this situation, for me, this career choice is immoral." So what about in the Christian worldview, are career choices and the use of money moral issue?

[Ryan]

<The Christian view on financial morality >

As far as career choices go, you know, as long as we're not talking about something that is illegal or dishonest or strictly forbidden in God's word, you know, the opportunities are really open; it's all about emphasis we place on them. You know, our pursuit of those things. In Matthew chapter 6, Jesus talks about you can't serve both God and money at the same time. You can't have two masters; God has to come first in order for you to have the right relationship with him, and that's the emphasis that I place on my life in these matters.

Video 3: Worldviews: Decisions on sexuality

[Keith]

For this worldview we will compare Christianity with secular humanism and see how they influence people's decisions in the area of sexuality. These two worldviews have very different sources of authority. For the secular humanist, the self is the authority; for the Christian, God and the Bible. This means that people with different worldviews will make very different decisions and end up with very different ideas about sexuality. If it's true that worldviews matter, that they determine why people make the decisions they make, then the question to answer is: How does your worldview influence your view of sexuality?

[Ryan]

[The Christian view on sexuality]

My Christian worldview affects my view on sexuality in one simple way. In the Ten Commandments, God gives us a very specific instruction that says: Don't have sex with people that aren't your spouse. And if we were to take that one rule and apply to our sexuality, a lot of the problems we face in our society would disappear, or at least dramatically be reduced. The idea of rape and unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, all of these things that causes so much pain in our society would be eliminated or dramatically reduced if we would just follow God's design for our lives.

[Keith]

<The Secular Humanist view on sexuality>

The secular humanist says that because there is no God, then humans are the measures all things. There is no higher authority than the individual person. Secular humanists expect to live life according to their own rules, not the man-made rules of society. So, when it comes to sexuality, their general attitude is if it feels good, do it. If it feels right for you, then it is right. Trust your desires. One of the key questions that each worldview has to answer is: How does that worldview think about mankind? Is mankind created in the image of God, and, if so, what does that mean for our sexuality?

[Ryan]

In the Bible, we find that man and woman are created in God's image. And before we decided to rebel against God, before the fall, God said that we were good, we were just the way he created us to be. So, when we live in those boundaries that God sets, that is good, that's what he wants us to do. It's when we step outside of the boundaries, specifically in this area of sexuality, we lead ourselves into a lot of hurt and pain, and undesirable results.

[Keith]

In the secular humanist worldview, humans are nothing but matter. We're an accident of evolution. One author described it this way: humans are a random accident of atoms. There's no reason humans should exist, since there is no God and no intelligent being that created us, and because there is no God, then each individual is the authority on what's right and what's wrong for their own life, and that includes in the area of sexuality.

[Ryan]

God created us as sexual being, man and woman. He created sex and it's an enjoyable thing. But like all things, there are boundaries that God expects us to stay within.

[Keith]

Sexuality is definitely a part of the secular humanists' worldview. They see the continuation of the human species as one of the most important goals, and, of course, sex is the natural way to continue the species. Each individual determine right and wrong for themselves. There are no predetermined boundaries of how to behave because there is no God to tell us how to behave.

Video 4: Worldviews: Definition of Family

[Keith]

In this module, we'll be comparing Christianity with atheistic existentialism and examining how they view the issue of family. A person's worldview, how a person thinks, impacts their decision making and will even influence their family. So, how does a person's worldview affect their view of family?

[Ryan]

My Christian worldview affects the view of my family in the way that the priority is placed on my family. I place a very high priorities on my family because of what the scriptures, what God models to us, that I need to value my wife, my children, I need to pour into them and invest in them. And that's how my Christian worldview affects just my family on a daily basis, the high priority that I put on them.

[Keith]

We said before that sometimes different worldviews will end up with similar results but the basis on which decisions are made will be completely different. This is one of those times. Most people including existentialists place a high priority on their families, but that doesn't meant that both existentialists and Christians see the family the same way. They even define the word *family* differently.

[Ryan]

Because of my Christian worldview, I define my family as my immediate family. For me, that's my wife and my children, and these are the most important relationships here on this earth that I have. I invest my time and my talent into these specific people because that is what God has called me to do. In Genesis, chapter 2, God creates Adam, and he is lonely so He creates Eve and He says for this reason a man will leave his father and mother. This is to be his number one priority here on earth to be caring for this woman. And my family relationships are my number one priority outside my relationship with God here on this earth.

[Keith]

Many atheistic existentialists would define family more broadly as any group of people who love each other or have long term commitment to each other. That might be considered a family. Not all existentialists would agree with that definition, but then again, it comes down to the question of authority. Who has the authority to define family? For the existentialists, just like the Secular Humanists, it's ultimately the individual person himself or herself. They have the attitude that no one can tell me what to do, you're not the boss of me. Now, on another issue, many people feel that there's a breakdown in family in today's society. What's the Christian response? If there is a breakdown, what's caused it?

[Ryan]

I believe that there is a breakdown in family in our culture, and it has to do with devaluation of marriage. You know, in the scriptures, we find that God sets up marriage as a covenant between a man and a woman and Himself. And in our society, we see that covenant not taken seriously, that it's okay to walk away when things get tough, or when things go bad. And this leads to problems in the families, we see children get hurt. And if would take that marriage covenant seriously, a lot of these issues we have with our family and society would be solved and we wouldn't have to worry about a lot of the problem we deal with today.

[Keith]

Pastor Nunez explained that human problems are rooted in sin, the violation of God's law. The atheistic existentialist doesn't acknowledge the concept of *sin* because there is no God. For the existentialist, all human problems, including the breakdown of family are either biological, psychological, or cultural in origin. That means that all human problems can be remedied by either biological, psychological, or cultural solutions.

Video 5: Worldviews: Suffering and Death

[Keith]

For this module, we'll be comparing Christianity with Pantheism and examining how each worldview thinks about the issues of suffering and death. The three worldviews you've studied so far, could be considered Western worldviews. They are based on naturalistic, scientific assumptions, and are generally rational. But now, as we turn to pantheism, we make a significant shift. Pantheism can be considered an Eastern worldview and by our Western standards, it's not very rational. So how does a person's worldview influence their understanding of suffering?

[Ryan]

<The Christian view on suffering>

The ideas of pain and suffering are greatly affected by my Christian worldview. As we look at Genesis, chapter 2, we find that men have decided to live on the outside of God's boundaries. They've decided to rebel against his rules. And because of that, pain and suffering enters into the world. Any time since then that we've lived outside his boundaries, pain and suffering are just a part of the consequences of the decisions we make on the daily basis.

[Keith]

<The Pantheists view on suffering>

For the Pantheists, dealing with the concepts of suffering is a bit of a challenge. Two foundational beliefs help explain Pantheism's views on suffering, but these two views contradict each other, even though they're both essential for Pantheism. First, Pantheism teaches that suffering isn't real; it's an illusion. Anything that is not God is an illusion. Second, karma is the belief that if a person lives well, behaves moral, does good to people in this life, then they will be rewarded in the next life. Of course, if that person treats others badly in this life, then they'll be punished in the next life. Even though suffering is just an illusion, karma explains why we suffer. Rather than being the result of sin, suffering is the result of bad karma. But what about death? Is death final or is there life after death? If so, what does that look like for the Christian?

[Ryan]

In the 5th chapter of Romans, Paul explains how one man's sin cause death that enters into this world. Because of Adam and Eve's rebellion against God, the decision to live outside of God's boundaries, the consequence is death. But, because of one man's death, Jesus, the God in the flesh, who came down onto this Earth, because of his death, we now all have the opportunity to have eternal life. Eternal life is our existence after this world in the presence of God forever.

[Keith]

It is important to remember that for the Pantheists, human problems don't really exist, they're just illusions. Even death is an illusion; your senses are deceiving you. Everything that appears real to our rational minds, isn't real. So when the physical body dies, nothing of importance is lost. The soul is eternal and that's what really matter. The soul is impersonal, a persons identity and personality are illusions. So, this impersonal soul is always seeking to be reunited with the cosmic soul, the impersonal God force.

Video 6: Worldviews: Friendships and Relationships

[Keith]

As we compare the New Age movement with Christianity in this module, we'll consider how each view human relationships. If what we've been saying is true, that worldviews impacts people's everyday decisions, then even the most mundane decisions will be influence. The practical implications of different worldviews will even be seen in the areas of friendships and relationships.

[Ryan]

My Christian worldviews affects the way that I view relationships in that I view the relationships, especially the ones closest to me, as very important to help and support the way I live my life. I want to make sure that the people that have the closest access to my life agree with the things that I'm trying to pursue, and that my relationship with God is supported by the people around me. The book of Proverbs says that it's shameful, that it's horrible if you fall down and you don't have someone right there beside you to pick you up. I want to make sure that I have close relationships with my life to help support me in my relationship with God.

[Keith]

<The New Age view on relationships>

Humans are naturally self-centered. You don't have to teach a little child to be selfish. The worldview of New Age is built on that tendency. It begins by focusing on the self, the self is divine. Each individual is a god, the creator of their own universe. Someone with a New Age worldview, they really are the center of their own universe. If you start with that basic premise, it can't help but impact your relationships.

[Ryan]

My Christian worldview calls me to look at relationships as opportunities to serve others: the way I interact with them should leave them in a positive light, that I should value other people around me, that I should invest in them, that I should serve them, that I should do to them what I would want them to do to me. Romans, chapter 12 says that I need to honor other people above myself.

[Keith]

For the person with a New Age worldview, it's all about the individual reaching their higher consciousness or their higher self. A person's behavior is determined by their efforts, and for the New Ager, that means that each individual determines for themselves what's right or wrong. Whatever it takes for a person to reach a new level of consciousness is considered right. They're driven by a pragmatic concern for reaching their own higher self, whatever it takes. This "whatever it takes" attitude can have a bearing on how they treat other people. When a New Ager interacts with another person, they don't see someone made in the image of God, they see someone who might be able to help them reach their higher self.