

Introduction

Every day we struggle against three things that conspire to push us away from truth. Understanding how the world, the flesh and the devil work will enable us to renew our minds and stand firm.

SESSION 4: The World's View Of Truth

Focus verse: *Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:12)*

Objective: To understand that Christians need to make a definite decision to turn away from what the world teaches and choose instead to believe what God says is true.

Focus Truth:

The world we grew up in influenced us to look at life in a particular way and to see that way as 'true'. However, if it doesn't stack up with what God says is true, we need to reject it and bring our beliefs into line with what really is true.



How do you see the world?

'Rose-tinted spectacles' or pessimistic 'spectacles'?

We All Have A Worldview

A worldview is "**A set of presuppositions or assumptions which we hold (consciously or subconsciously) about the basic make-up of the world.**"

James Sire, "The Universe Next Door"

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Your Worldview Is Like A Filter

Everything that happens passes through it to give us meaning
But a faulty worldview will lead to faulty judgements about our life. e.g. 3D

Need to see the world as it really is i.e. as God says it is

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Where Did Your Worldview Come From?

* Past experiences

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* Culture

1. A Non-Western Worldview (Animism)

- A creator god (or gods); distant; no significant role in daily life
- Two sources of spiritual power
 - 'mana' (neutral)
 - good & evil spirits

Mana: impersonal power in everything; good or evil depends on how it is used; shaman/witch-doctor/medicine man is the expert in dealing with this because he knows the special formulas, activities and words to manipulate it.

Spirits: Associated with objects or with people who have died; some control by knowing the right things to do or say; this control is not perfect and leads to constant fear of displeasing the spirits, who will then afflict them, or of other people directing this power against them.

Found all over the world, often mixed with other religion. Has spread to western society in 'New Age' thinking.

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2. The Western/Modern Worldview

- Most would say they believe in God but He is really so irrelevant that He may as well not exist
- Reality is divided into 'natural' & 'supernatural'
- Spiritual things are irrelevant to daily life
- Reality is defined only by what we can see, touch and measure
- The natural world is governed by fixed laws. If there is a God he is distant and doesn't interfere.

"Essentially the Western view is: If you can't test it and you can't prove it scientifically then it isn't true."

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3. The Postmodern Worldview

"Most of us brought up in the West have been influenced by both modern and postmodern worldviews. And the younger you are the more likely you are to have postmodernism as the dominant view in your thinking."

"There are many kinds of eyes..., and consequently there are many kinds of 'truths', and consequently there is **no truth**." Nietzsche

- There is no such thing as objective truth
- Everyone has his or her own version of 'truth'
- Each person's 'truth' is as valid as everyone else's. Therefore, any worldview that claims to have all the answers (e.g. Christianity) is viewed with mistrust.
- Who I am = what I do. If you disagree with my 'truth' or disapprove of my actions, you are rejecting me

"In effect, postmodernism says that all claims to truth are equal except those, like Christianity, that say that all truth claims are not equal."

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4. The Biblical Worldview

- Truth does exist, because God is truth
- Faith and logic are not incompatible

Example: Does what you believe happens to you when you die make any difference to what actually happens to you when you die? Or will everyone have the same experience after death whatever you believe beforehand?

A logical impossibility: all views are true at the same time. There must be real truth whatever of what we choose to believe.

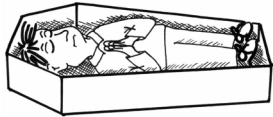
'In the Biblical view, truth is that which is ultimately, finally and absolutely real, or the way it is and, therefore is utterly trustworthy and dependable, being grounded and anchored in God's own reality and truthfulness.' (Os Guinness)

Objective truth: true anywhere for everyone and for all time. It doesn't contradict itself.

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We say that Jesus is the only way: do we feel intolerant or arrogant?

Crucial question: What happens when we die?



Death-Ultimate Reality

Believing Biblical revelation has led to extraordinary action.

However unfashionable, Jesus has said, *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* (John 14:6)

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Beware Of Mix 'n Match

* It is important that we recognise that our upbringing & experiences ('spectacles') have led us to look at life in a particular way.

* We need to ditch our old way of thinking, not simply add our Christian beliefs to it. *"Otherwise we'll be 'doubleminded... unstable in all we do.'" (James 1:8)*

* The mix 'n match approach is very common & very dangerous

We might say we believe what God says but our behaviour will demonstrate that we believe something quite different.

What guides our decisions:

- what God says or what we can afford?
- prayer or what we can sort out?
- experience or Biblical truth? e.g. Why are you a Christian?

Experience (however good) or truth?

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**"The Christian faith is not true because it works.
It works because it is true." (Os Guinness)**

"Truth is true even if nobody believes it and falsehood is false even if everybody believes it."

The Christian faith is choosing to believe what God says is true, not be double-minded and unstable (*James 1:8*).

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"...Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity."

(Romans 12:1-2. J.B. Phillips Translation)

In The Coming Week

Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth and to reveal to your mind the lies you have believed as a result of having been brought up with a non-Biblical worldview.

Big Question (to consider before the next session)

If we share God's nature and we are saints, why do you think it is that we still feel such a pull to ways of thinking and behaving that go against God's best?