

## Chapter 3

# Christian Worldview

Do you sometimes wonder why you cannot get through to your clients? They seem to be on a different planet. You think you are speaking the same language. The issue is deeper. Depending on how long you have been a Christian, you may not remember how your worldview has changed. We have found truth that replaced the secular theology of our past. Our clients may not have yet had that privilege. Our worldview affects everything about us.

Worldview includes a set of beliefs on which you base your actions, attitudes, and even emotions. This belief system is established bit-by-bit starting at a very early age. Your stronger beliefs are stored as convictions, whereas your surface beliefs can be greatly affected by what is going on around you. There is value in discovering your clients' worldview to understand the root of their beliefs and behaviors. Their worldview affects their behavior, how they relate to others, how they respond to rules.

“A worldview is a set of presuppositions and beliefs that someone uses to interpret and form opinions about his humanity, purpose in life, duties in the world, responsibilities to family, interpretation of truth, social issues, etc. A Christian should view all these things, and more, guided by the light that is shed upon them by the Bible.” - Matt Slick

A nationwide survey conducted by The Barna Group in 2009 explored how many adults have what might be considered a “biblical worldview.” A “biblical worldview” was defined as believing that absolute moral truth exists; the Bible is totally accurate in all of the principles it teaches; Satan is considered to be a real being or force, not merely symbolic; a person cannot earn their way into Heaven by trying to be good or do good works; Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth; and God is the all-knowing, all-powerful creator of the world who still rules the universe today. In the research, anyone who held all of those beliefs was said to have a “biblical worldview.” Only 9% of Americans believed all these and only 19% of those who labeled themselves as “born again” agreed to all.

“A worldview is like a set of lenses which taint our vision or alter the way we perceive the world around us. Our worldview is formed by our education, our upbringing, the culture we live in, the books we read, the media and movies we absorb, etc. For many people their worldview is simply something they have absorbed by osmosis from their surrounding cultural influences. They have never thought strategically about what they believe and wouldn't be able to give a rational defense of their beliefs to others.” – Israel Wayne <http://www.christianworldview.net/>

When Jesus was praying to the Father in John 17, He maintained that His disciples were not of the world (v.16), and immediately added, "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth" (v.17). His truth keeps us from thinking like the world. Our worldview needs to replicate God's worldview.

### **How Does Your Belief System Affect Your Potential Ministry?**

You build your belief system by facts (evidence), tradition, association, authority, and relationship. When your beliefs do not line up with the truth of Scripture, your ministry may produce rotten apples. Here are some questions to consider as you evaluate the accuracy of your own worldview. Who is God? What has He done in history? What does He continue to do today? Are humans inherently good or evil? Do humans have choices, or is everything a matter of fate?

Although research shows that most of a person's worldview is set by age 13, we are all examples of how this is not necessarily true. We have a responsibility to present truth to those God sends to us. One of the great ways is through discipling by Scripture discussion. "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2(NIV)).

Our own testimony shared at select points can have an effect. Most of us have gone through life not recognizing how the media and a secularized view of history, law, politics, science, God, and man, has affected our thinking. Combine sharing how truth has changed your thinking with the study of Colossians 2:8, "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ."

As you are analyzing your worldview, consider how it affects your definition of compassion, of grace, servant leadership, authority, and rights. What you believe affects how you respond to God and to others. As Christians, we have the advantage of knowing the source of truth, but as humans, we have the inclination to massage that truth to fit our traditions, associations, experiences, etc. This becomes especially crucial when we are in a position to influence others. Ministry means I must be very aware that my own belief system will influence how I relate to others. Let this chapter lead you to prayer as you seek to be a bearer of truth.

Here are some false belief systems that people in ministry hold on to:

- Some people will never change, so I don't need to waste time talking with them.
- God does not love people who do not obey Him.
- My beliefs are biblical; it is just my actions that are messed up.

My beliefs are the basis for my convictions, which in turn are the basis for my actions.

### **Impact on Clients**

The second goal of this study is to recognize how the belief system of the clients you work with may be blocking them from salvation and/or growth. I need to be able to meet people where they are and walk with them through the process of truth-seeking.

Here are some examples of worldview beliefs you may be encountering in your clients that will affect the impact of your ministry:

- “You only have one life; you better get all the gusto you can.” (And you are trying to teach the life skill of money management.)
- “I need to protect myself. No one else is going to.” (Do you wonder why they have difficulty trusting God?)
- “The world revolves around me.” (Where did their entitlement thinking come from?)
- “My value is based on how much stuff I have.” (Guess there is no need for God?)
- “Decisions about what is good or bad should be left up to each person.” (Who made you to be telling me what to do?)
- “My motto is ‘Question Authority.’”
- “I am responsible for myself and no one else.” (A little hard to promote accountability.)
- “Truth depends on how you see things.”
- “God loves only good people.”

Knowing where belief systems originate, and the difference between surface beliefs and convictions, you have the opportunity to disciple your clients. Helping them have an accurate set of beliefs will impact their success in life.

Consider the following specific beliefs that your clients may be holding:

- The Bible says that God helps those who help themselves.
- I have done too many bad things for Jesus to accept me.
- You have to earn your way to heaven. The more good you do, the better your chances.
- God sits on His throne and does not know I exist.
- I am a victim of my circumstances.
- Respect is something you have to earn.
- When you become a Christian, you can’t enjoy life anymore.
- The Bible says God wants everyone to be rich.
- If you live right, there will be no problems.

Truth sets people free. The only way to combat false belief systems is with the truth of Scripture. I must not assume that those I am talking with know the truth; I have the opportunity to spread truth.

Some of my personal beliefs that have affected the ministry God has called me to include:

- Romans 8:1, “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”
- There is no such thing as a mistake if I learn from it. (Examples of God’s sovereignty in biblical characters.)
- God changes the desires of my heart to line up with His when I delight in Him (Psalms 37:4).
- Although God’s love is unconditional, promises usually come with mandates (e.g., 2 Chronicles 7:14; **1 John 1:9; John 3:16**).
- **I have been given only one right (John 1:12). I have privileges and responsibilities but no other rights.**

- **My time, talents, and energy, come from the Lord and belong to Him, and He can choose to use them any way He wishes (Romans 14:8; Matthew 25:14-30; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 1 Chronicles 29:14).**
- **God desires relationship with me more than service (Micah 6:8; Hosea 6:6).**
- Thankfulness is a cure for most things that trouble me (Philippians 4:6).

**For more study on this topic, check out writings by Del Tackett on Christian Worldview. I highly recommend The Truth Project, a video series for your staff and for your clients.**