

Northview University: Worldviews 101

“Learning to Love God with Your Worldview”

Session 4:

“Detecting Worldviews in the Bible and in Our World: Non-Theistic Worldviews”

ANSWERS IN COLOR

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Introduction

A. A person with a CHRISTIAN (or biblical) worldview:

1. _____ **LOVES** God with heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mk. 12:30).
2. Is adequately _____ **INFORMED** by God’s revelation (2 Tim. 3:15).
3. Is NOT taken _____ **CAPTIVE** by deceptive philosophies (Col. 2:8).
4. Takes every thought _____ **CAPTIVE** to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5).
5. Strives to _____ **LIVE** its implications consistently in _____ **EVERY** area of life (Rom. 8:5 “set their minds” on the things of the Spirit).

B. Previous session: Theistic worldviews (worldviews that affirm a god or God).

1. Christian Theism
2. Deism
3. Pantheism (and New Age)
4. Sects and Cults
5. Islam

C. This session: Non-Theistic worldviews (worldviews that deny God).

1. Secular Humanism (Modernism)
2. Nihilism
3. Existentialism
4. Postmodernism

I. Secular Humanism (“Modernism”)

A. Overview ideas

- 1. S _____ SCIENCE
- 2. N _____ NATURE ONLY
- 3. O _____ OPTIMISTIC
- 4. R _____ REASON
- 5. E _____ EVOLUTION

B. Basic theme: “We can do it if we put our minds to it.”

C. Object example: _____ LEGOS

D. Cultural connections: Charles Darwin; Carl Sagan; Berenstain Bear’s *Nature Guide*; Richard Dawkins; Michael Shermer; Bill Maher; Spock from *Star Trek*; *The Titanic*; *Mission Impossible*; *CSI* TV series; *Numb3rs*.

E. Biblical connections

1. The Epicurean philosophers (Acts 17)

The Epicureans	Paul’s Sermon
Materialists (all is matter)	God made the world (24); God is not gold or silver (29).
No creation	God made the world (24).
No purpose	We should seek God (27).
No judgment	There is judgment (31)
No personal freedom	God commands all to repent (30)
	God raised Jesus from the dead (31-32)

- 2. Luke 12:15-23 (parable of the rich man): “Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions” (15).... Then he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry”’ (18-19).
- 3. Luke 15:11-14 (the prodigal son).
- 4. Matthew 16:26 “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”
- 5. Philippians 3:17-21 “... their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things.”

II. Nihilism (nihil = Latin for “nothing”)

A. Overview ideas

1. **N** _____ really matters. **NOTHING**
2. **A** _____ **ABSURDITY** of Life (“I don’t care”; “I give up”)
3. **P** _____ **PESSIMISTIC** outlook.

B. Basic theme: Nothing is ultimately true, valuable, or meaningful.

C. Object illustration: A _____ **TOILET**

D. Cultural connections: “Murder by Number”; “Final Destination”; “Bohemian Rhapsody”; Douglas Adams’ *Hitch Hiker* “trilogy”; John Cage; “Seinfeld”; Kurt Cobain, Columbine shootings; Samuel Beckett.

E. Biblical connections

1. Romans 1:28-31 “... And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper ...” (28).
2. Ecclesiastes 2:10-11 “... I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun” (11).

III. Atheistic Existentialism¹

A. Background

1. Kierkegaard (1813-1855), a theist and father of existentialism.
2. Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*
3. Jean Paul Sartre

B. Overview ideas

1. F _____ FEELINGS
2. A _____ ABSURDITY OF LIFE
3. D _____ DEFINE YOURSELF TODAY

C. Basic theme: “Life is absurd. Be free and have fun.”

D. Object illustration: Mr. _____ POTATO HEAD

E. Cultural connections: Friedrich Nietzsche; John Paul Sartre; Albert Camus; a lot of high school and college youth! Ferris Bueller; the character “Jack” in the movie *Titanic*; *Groundhog Day*; *Dead Poets’ Society* (*carpe deum*); Hugh Hefner.

F. Biblical connections

1. Philippians 3:17-21 “... their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things.”
2. I Peter 4:1-5 “For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you; but they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead” (3-5).

¹ Existentialism has an *atheistic* form (e.g. Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus), but there are also *theistic* versions of Existentialism that stress having a direct encounter and relationship with some higher power. Theistic (“Christian”) existentialists minimize or reject the importance of doctrine (scripture) or history in favor of personal experience and communication with God.

IV. Postmodernism²

A. “Cultural” Postmodernism vs. “Philosophical” Postmodernism

B. Overview ideas

1. F _____ FRAGMENTATION
2. U _____ UNCERTAINTY
3. R _____ RELATIVISM

C. Basic theme: “Different strokes for different folks.”

D. Object illustration: A _____ REMOTE
CONTROL

E. Cultural connections: Madonna; Britney Spears; *Star Trek: The Next Generation*; *The Truman Show*; *The Matrix*; *Lost*; *Inception*; Reality TV shows.

F. Postmodernism and the pachyderm.

V. Conclusion

A. The stages of shunning God (Romans 1:20-32)

1. They _____ SENSE God.
2. They _____ SUPPRESS God.
3. They _____ SPECULATE alternatives.
4. They _____ SUBSTITUTE something else.
5. God _____ SEVERES them.
6. They become morally _____ SHAMELESS.

B. 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 “For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (18).

² Postmodernism is multi-faceted and difficult to classify. Postmodernism is a philosophical *position* that disputes the possibility of universal truth and values. But postmodernism is also a *method* that questions the power of human reason, the prestige of science, and the possibilities of certainty and objectivity. As a result, some professing Christians see postmodernism as useful for the Christian faith, and some professing Christians regard themselves as “postmodernists.” Here, I will consider *strong* versions of Postmodernism that reject the very possibility of universal moral principles and Truth—principles that are necessary if biblical Christianity is itself true.