

Anson – World View and Ethics

Hi, my name is Major General retired Doug Anson, and I'm excited to be bringing you this class on worldview and ethics.

First, a little bit about myself and my background. I am a lifelong Christian.

I can honestly say that I think I've known and felt the presence of the Lord as far back as I can remember.

Now, when somebody asks me today why I'm a Christian, I think my answer has changed in recent years, and it's not because my beliefs have changed.

But when a nonbeliever especially asked me, why are you a Christian? I say I'm a Christian because I believe Christianity is true.

Now, when I say that, they immediately say, well, why do you think it's true? And I say, well, I believe Christianity is true both in my heart and my mind.

Now we know that our heart knows that Jesus is our Lord and Savior because the Holy Spirit has filled our heart and we know that through him.

But a non-believer is particularly interested and almost taken aback sometimes when I say, I believe Christianity is true with my mind.

And they ask, well, why? How do you think Christianity is true with your mind? And I said, well, from an intellectual perspective, I think Christianity and the Christian worldview is more rational and has more evidence to support it than any other worldview. And then I'll say, Imagine if the God of the Bible truly does exist, and if he does exist, and as scripture says, he created everything.

then I tell the non-believer or ask the non-believer, then wouldn't his fingerprints likely be on everything? And the non-believer would typically say, well, yeah. And I said, well, they are. I see God in science. I see God in mathematics.

as he got in history, in philosophy, in archaeology, and worldviews.

God created the universe and there is much science to indicate that there is a beginning of the universe and there is some intelligent being behind that creation. Jesus really did take on flesh.

walked the face of this earth and was bodily resurrected. And historical analysis and The historicity of the resurrection support this. The Bible is truly the word of God and literary analysis and archeology support this. And the big questions of life, who am I? Why am I here? Do I have a purpose in this life? What's right? What's wrong? Why is something right? Why is

something wrong? I believe that the Christian worldview provides more comprehensive and coherent answers than any other worldview.

Now I've had two careers, one in the military and one in science. And as you can see here from the picture behind me, Here's a military setting. This is the school that I went to when I was prior to becoming an officer in the United States Army. This is the United States Military Academy at West Point.

And in the foreground, you can see the cadets lined up for parade.

And in the back up on the hill, overlooking the parade ground and overlooking all the barracks, is the Cadet Chapel, the Protestant Chapel. And that's where I attended church during my four years there.

Now in this lesson, we're gonna talk about worldviews and ethics, what a worldview is, and its relationship to morality and ethics.

I believe that this lesson will be your framework for all your ethical studies going forward.

You'll learn that even if you don't know what a worldview is at this point, everyone, including you, holds a worldview. And knowing someone's worldview is very helpful in understanding what they believe, why they believe, and why they act the way they do.

We'll see that worldviews are really this ultimate source of ethical behavior.

Values drive behavior, but worldviews are the source of one's values.

Now, as you interact with others in your culture, in your country, in your military or other profession, you're going to see people acting very differently. Political leaders, military leaders, those that you work with and for.

will make decisions that you might find strange. And if you're a chaplain, for example, you might be working alongside chaplains of other faiths.

and you'll see them making decisions in ethical situations that maybe you don't agree with.

So it's important that you not only understand your biblical worldview, but you understand the worldviews of others around you.

And I think if you do that, you will find yourself in a better position to deal with the challenges and the ethical dilemmas that maybe you're currently facing and you will in the future.

So I hope this class is of use to you in your ethical lives, but in your life in general. So let's get started.

Here's the outline for our class. I want to first introduce you to something called Christian apologetics.

It's important that you are familiar with it because apologetics is the larger branch of Christian theology that includes the study of worldviews.

Then we'll discuss a worldview, its definition, why it matters to us, Something called the big life questions. All worldviews must answer.

And then we'll compare two very different worldviews and their different values and ethics.

I'll also refer you in the end to four references, four books that I hope you obtain at some point and read. They'll give you an understanding of worldviews that goes well beyond this single class. And finally, I recommend everyone participate in an exercise that ask you to examine a worldview in your own culture or country. So let's get started.

Following my military and civilian careers, I embarked on a study of Christian apologetics.

After completing my degree in seminary, I founded a global ministry called Apologetics on Mission, or AOM for short.

So what is apologetics? It is the rational and evidential basis for Christianity.

Apologetics is the English translation for the Greek word found in the New Testament.

Apologia, which means to defend or defend the faith.

Some of the verses citing or exhorting apologetics include 1 Peter 3 15, Acts 22.1 and 1 Philippians 1.7.

I discovered apologetics about 12 years ago after my oldest son walked away from his faith.

In a search to find a way to talk to him about God and faith, and eventually the gospel, I was led to apologetics through a series of God things or providential events.

I studied at both the Denver Seminary and the Talbot School of Theology in Biola University.

Throughout the history of the church, apologists have addressed many different challenges and questions about Christianity.

Many involve theological questions. Many involve what one might call general revelation challenges.

That is evidence of God in his creation.

As such, and particularly relevant in most cultures, apologetics offers evidence and rational arguments for God and Christianity in history, science, mathematics, philosophy, archeology, worldviews and other areas.

AOM's mission, we serve where there is little awareness, visibility, and access to apologetics training.

We build long-term relationships with leaders in the regions around the world.

and help them defend Christianity and empower the next generation to do the same.

I've had the wonderful opportunity to serve in Latin America, including in Honduras, El Salvador, Brazil and Chile.

In Africa, in Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe and other members of my ministry have served in Nigeria, Zambia and South Africa. We also currently serve in Croatia and Taiwan.

I said apologetics is the defense of the faith of Christianity. It's also a branch of theology.

as it says here, that offers a rational defense for the truthfulness and the divine origin and authority of Christianity.

Now, does apologetics have a biblical basis? Absolutely. If it did not, we would not be talking about it.

This is probably the most cited verse concerning apologetics, and I just mentioned it previously, 1 Peter 3.15.

which says, But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord.

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have, but do this with gentleness and respect.

I underlined two portions of this verse: always be prepared to give a reason.

Now this is a command or what we say theologically an imperative. Peter is not recommending that we always be prepared. He's stating Absolutely. Always be prepared. So if this is new to you, apologetics is something that we are directed to do.

by the Lord through Peter himself. Now there are many other verses and passages that use the word Apologia and also other passages that describe apologetics activities, including by many by Jesus himself. Now, we don't have time to do that in this particular lesson, but the greatest apologist that has ever lived. Surprisingly, it shouldn't be a surprise to you, Jesus Christ was in fact the greatest apologist that ever lived. No one defended the faith better than he.

Here's one of several references I provide for you in this lesson. This one is called the Apologetics Study Bible.

And as it says here, there's over 140 short articles that are inserted throughout the Bible. and they're strategically placed by passages, scriptural passages that are relevant to that topic. several topics that are covered under apologetics in general and are addressed in the Study Bible.

biblical reliability, religious pluralism, the problem of evil and suffering, the historicity of the resurrection, Discussions concerning Islam, Mormonism, Jehovah Witness, and other religions and cults.

science and faith, abortion, euthanasia, sexuality, and worldviews.

World views is perhaps the area of apologetics that I am most interested in and what we'll discuss today.

All Christians, not just apologists, must have an understanding of worldviews, both their own worldview as well as those in the culture around them.

So we'll discuss a worldview's relationship to ethics in this lesson as the basis and framework for all the ethics lessons that you will have in the future.

Thank you.

So let's talk about what a worldview is. According to the Worldview Study Bible, which is one of the references I offer up at the end, The term worldview has been around for a long time. It was first employed by a philosopher named Immanuel Kant in the late 1700s.

but the concept of a worldview took on new significance for Christians with the publication of a book called the Christian view of God and the world in the late 19th century.

but it has only been recently, in the last, oh, I would say 30, 40 years, that Christians have once again taken an interest in worldview studies and consider it an essential task in the mandate to become serious Christian.

Well, here's a simple, informal definition of a worldview.

your basic beliefs about reality. Sometimes people like to describe a worldview as if you're wearing sunglasses and what does sunglasses do? They filter out the bad rays of the sun and protect your eyes, but they also cause you to see the surroundings around you in a certain way.

So a worldview can be considered a set of lens that causes you to see the world in a certain way and judge the world in a certain way.

Let's look at a more descriptive definition of a worldview to give us better understanding. It is a blueprint or a map, again for reality, It is the framework of our most basic beliefs that shapes our view of and for the world.

And particularly important for this lesson, it is the basis for our decisions and actions. It's the basis for ethical behavior.

So there are two key aspects then of any worldview. First, it is a particular perception of reality, that is of the world around us.

And second, it is the basis for one's decisions and actions.

Let's now talk briefly about why worldviews matter. Now, I've already stated or implied several reasons why they matter, the most important of which related to our teaching of ethics is that worldviews are the source of one's personal values and ultimately one's behavior.

While worldviews can be dissected intellectually, they also reflect and address the orientation of one's innermost being, that is, your heart.

It's also worth noting that in the real world, some people profess or claim to hold a certain worldview, but don't actually live it.

So we have to determine what someone's worldview really is, despite what they may say.

How might we do this? Well, by watching their behavior, especially under challenging or stressful ethical situations, Behavior is the true indicator of one's worldview and values.

What's in someone's heart, as Professor Grothuis, the author of this statement says, is where the values and behavior emerge from.

While I highly recommend that all our MCFs, our interns, and chaplains intentionally form and live out their worldview, they also need to understand the other competing worldviews that surround them. For example, those belonging to Muslim chaplains, who they might have to work with in military environments, and those worldviews that their culture largely endorses.

Well, let's take a quick look at our own worldview, the Christian or biblical worldview, and see ways in which it matters.

First, it sets us apart from the world. As Paul tells us in Romans 12, A Christian worldview will keep us from being quote-unquote conformed to this world.

Second, the Christian worldview aids our spiritual transformation. Paul tells us to renew our minds.

Because thinking as a Christian is part of the process of sanctification.

And third, the Christian worldview helps us to know how to live. That is, how to think and how to act.

As Paul explains, it allows us to, quote, discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

Knowing how to live is what we're talking about in our ethics studies.

Paul calls followers of Jesus to renew their minds and to offer themselves as living sacrifices to him.

Similarly, Peter calls believers to prepare their minds for action in 1 Peter.

These exhortations form the foundation for learning to think Christianly about life and about the world.

and how we should behave in this world. This is the beginning of worldview thinking.

while we're looking at worldviews primarily from the perspective of ethics worldview understanding also has both discipleship and evangelism implications From a personal perspective, My understanding of the biblical worldview and other worldviews has significantly reinforced my faith.

Once I compared and contrasted several worldviews, it became very clear that the biblical worldview Christianity is absolutely true, at least far more plausible than any other worldview.

I realized that I could better talk about my faith, both to my son and to others, and because I was absolutely convinced that the Christian worldview is true.

Apologetics enables this understanding in general, but the understanding of worldviews in particular is critical to discipleship.

But I want to take just a moment to show you how worldview understanding also has evangelistic implications. And I'll do that with Paul, when he was in Athens in Acts 17. If you recall, whenever Paul would go someplace, when he would come to a town or come to a city, the first place that he would generally go to would be the synagogue.

And who would he talk to in a synagogue? Well, obviously Jews. And these Jews held a Judaic worldview.

Now, that's not a Christian worldview, but very close.

Both Christians and Jews believe in God, the God of the Bible.

a personal being, the creator of this universe.

And both the Jewish worldview and the Christian worldview at that time both held Scripture up to be truly the Word of God. But when Paul was talking to the Jews who held a different worldview, they had much in common. Belief in God and belief in Scripture. So what he did...

focused on was to make the case for Christ, the Messiah.

However, if you recall from Acts 17, Paul shared the gospel and shared Christianity in the streets in the marketplace of Athens. And as a result, he was invited up to the Areopagus, or sometimes called Mars Hill, which is at the foreground of this picture, the white rock.

where the council, the intellectual council, the moral council for Athens resided and they asked him to explain his faith. Now in this picture you'll see the Athens in the background, and you see the Acropolis up on the higher hill behind the Areopagus.

But when Paul was speaking to the members of this council, they were not Jews, but Luke tells us purposely.

what world views they held. They held predominantly either Epicureanism or Stoicism. Now, those two worldviews are not common today.

But if you were to study them, you would see that Epicureanism is fundamentally a material-based worldview.

or you could say it's atheistic or naturalistic in its view. The Stoics, stoic worldview has pantheistic roots, and we have pantheistic worldviews in existence today.

Because Paul knew this, Paul obviously held a Christian worldview, but he understood these other two worldviews.

And as a result, he spoke to these non-believers in a very different way than he did the Jews down in the synagogue.

an important evangelistic message that understanding someone else's worldview gives you a better idea of what the most effective way it is to talk to others and to eventually share the gospel. In this particular case, he started with general revelation and eventually worked his way to sharing the gospel.

But he never cited scripture because he knew they knew nothing about the Bible. Instead, he cited some of their own poets to reinforce the points he was making.

and he never actually mentioned Jesus' name. He referred to the man who was resurrected.

So I just share this with you briefly for the values of worldviews, both for discipleship purposes as well as evangelism.

So let's get back to why worldviews matter from an ethical perspective. This is a portion of what some people call the ethics triangle.

Where does ethical behavior come from? This suggests that it comes from one's beliefs or values. There are organizational values. If you're in the military, the military offers up a set of values. Of course, the culture has values.

And then each one of us has set of personal values. Now, cultures and professions including the military profession, possess and proclaim values they want all members to embrace.

The goal, of course, is to have everyone internalize the values so that the desired behavior follows.

MCFs and chaplains are certainly influenced by their own cultural and military values.

Their professional military values are likely stated clearly, but the cultural values may not be so clear.

and may in fact conflict with the military values.

And the behavior of military leaders may differ from their professed professional values. And all of this, of course, leads to ethical challenges and dilemmas.

As a well-known Christian ministry in the United States writes, a person's code of ethics or behavior will be no better than the foundation of the truth or values that it is based upon.

Let me share as an example, the US Army values. They're listed here. Loyalty.

Loyalty, we say, is bearing true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, your unit and other soldiers.

fulfilling your obligations and completing assigned tasks to the best of your ability without taking shortcuts.

acting on an inner sense of what is morally and professionally right.

Respect, treating all people with dignity and respect. Selfless service, putting the welfare of the nation the army, and your subordinates before your own, committing to go the extra distance for the greater good.

Honor is defined as living up and behaving in accordance with all the Army values. Integrity.

Integrity is doing what is right both legally and morally.

meaning to consistently adhere to moral principles and being honest in word and deed.

Of course, the question that you should ask at this point doing what is right morally, then the question becomes, well, what is right morally? And that's where we'll see worldviews come into play.

And then finally, personal courage. This means one must face, not shy away from, fear, danger, or adversity, whether it be physical or moral.

This includes enduring physical stress, but also standing up for what is right, especially when it's unpopular.

The U.S. Army also has what they call a soldier's creed that reinforces these values. And the first three lines of this creed are, I am an American soldier.

I am a warrior and a member of a team, and I serve the people of the United States and live the Army values.

So again, this is what the US Army promotes in terms of value in order to have soldiers behave and act ethically and morally in certain ways.

Now I've mentioned personal values, those values that you personally hold and live by. They are ultimately the source of your values.

but I'm gonna generalize personal values and where they come from in terms of worldviews.

Your worldview is the source of your personal values. And this completes what we call the ethics triangle.

As one apologist and worldview author says, different worldviews are the reason, quote, people hold conflicting views on such ultimate concerns as truth, reality, ethics, and values.

He also says, because beliefs or values precede behavior, understanding what a worldview is, being familiar with its component elements, and learning to evaluate differing worldviews can equip people to better deal with harsh reality and with each other.

Now, here's some quick and maybe very obvious to you examples of worldviews influence on someone's behavior.

A person holding a biblical worldview, let's start right there, has a set of values which we can ascertain from Jesus himself.

the Ten Commandments and also from Paul's fruit of the Spirit. So Jesus tells us in the Great Commandment, love the Lord with all your heart.

soul and mind. And the second commandment is love your neighbor as yourself. The Ten Commandments provide us values. You shall not kill, commit adultery, or steal.

Now, they're kind of, in a negative sense, more positively, we Christians should show humility, mercy, and justice.

And the fruit of the Spirit says, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

should be some of our Christian values.

Whereas a person holding a pantheistic, say a Buddhist worldview, holds many of the same values as us believers. For example, They will cite love and peace and kindness and gentleness as important values for them.

But these values come from a very different place, a very different worldview.

which causes a devoted Buddhist to behave in very different ways than us, depending on the circumstances.

The Christian Worldview Handbook, which is going to be yet another one of your references, Says an examined and thoughtful worldview is a comprehensive life system that seeks to answer the basic questions of life.

And the Apologetic Study Bible, which I referred to you earlier, says a worldview is the total of answers.

people give to the most important questions in life. According to some, the five most important elements in any worldview or what people believe about God, what they believe about ultimate reality, what they believe about knowledge, where it comes from, what they believe about human nature, as well as what they believe about ethics.

So how does one thoughtfully and comprehensively form a worldview or decide which one is true? A well-thought-out, intentionally formed worldview should answer ultimate concerns that philosophers often call the big questions of life.

Five of them are shown here. The first one, ultimate reality.

Each worldview must decide what is ultimate reality.

What kind of God, if any, exists? External reality, is there anything beyond the cosmos, beyond this universe, beyond this physical universe that we know? Knowledge, what can be known and how can anyone know it? Where does knowledge come from? Origin, where do I come from? Identity, who am I? Is there anything that makes me as a human being unique? Or am I, in fact, really not all that different from other forms of life? World views have different answers to these questions.

Now these are just five. Here are six more. And I underlined the first two.

morals and values. Morals, how should I live? Values, what should I consider of great worth? Some more examples of how different world views and their associated values can radically affect one behavior are as follows.

the Muslim who flies a plane into the US World Trade Tower based on his world view That is based on certain interpretations of the Quran. For example, Quran 9.5.

is a verse that talks about fighting disbelievers.

And the Quran verse 2, 191 says, kill them wherever you find them, referring to non-Muslims.

So one's interpretation of those verses can lead to the kind of actions that we saw on 9-11.

How about the upper caste Hindu in India? For example, a Brahmin priest.

who refuses to help the poor and suffering Indian who is a member of their untouchable class called the Dalits, because his pantheistic worldview belief in karma and reincarnation, His worldview teaches that these poor people should not be helped because they are where they are because of bad decisions and behavior in previous lives.

and must, on their own, correct this so that they can live better in the next reincarnated life.

So the Brahmin priest, according to this worldview, will walk by the poor.

And his value system says, do not help them. The Christian worldview is very different we don't walk by the poor we help the poor as Jesus taught us Or a third example, the atheist or naturalist who does not believe in God or anything supernatural and thus believes that he has no soul, that his existence is simply an accident of nature, and whose existence ends upon death.

In this worldview, abortion, suicide, assisted suicide are morally okay.

In fact, naturalists cannot logically claim anything is right or wrong because they have no objective basis for morality in their worldview.

And we don't have to look very far. Hitler, Stalin, Mao Zedong, Idi Amin, and many others like them who held power to see the effects of godless worldviews.

Here's an excellent book on worldviews. Again, another one of your references.

This book significantly helped my own spiritual journey. It both reinforced my faith by showing me why the Christian worldview is true, and gave me confidence to share my faith.

James Steyer, the author, wrote six editions of what is becoming almost a classic worldview book before he died in 2018. He was an American Christian philosopher.

philosopher, author, and editor who originally wrote it for Christian students.

However, and amazingly so, praise the Lord, it was quickly adopted as a textbook in many non-Christian universities.

You see here some of the worldviews he examines in the book. We're going to take a similar approach as his when we compare our biblical worldview.

with the worldview of naturalism.

So let's go ahead and directly compare two world views.

To do this, we're going to pick a subset, just a few of those questions that I showed you earlier. Again, to identify someone's worldview, you need to ask these questions and see how they answer these questions, as well as the same for you.

That's how you determine what somebody's worldview is, and that's really the best way to compare worldviews.

So the big life questions that we're going to use are these shown here.

And again, as I said, the Apologetic Study Bible tells us that a worldview is the total of answers people give to the most important questions of life.

So here we'll ask, we'll look at two worldviews and we'll ask the question, what is ultimate reality from that worldview's perspective? And then we'll look at what I call the humanity questions. Origin, where do humans come from? Identity, who are we? Again, are we unique in any way? Meaning, is there any meaning to life? Why are we here? Morality, how ought we act? What is right? What is wrong? And why is something right? And why is something wrong? And destination, where are we as a human race or individually headed? Let's start with our own worldview. It's probably important that we all understand what our biblical worldview is. And again, while I suspect that many of your worldviews are new to you, because you are believers, I suspect you know the answers to these questions already. But let's step through and be sure.

So the Christian or biblical worldview engages with facts and evidence, unlike many other worldviews.

testing this facts and the evidence for historical credibility and logical coherence.

The Christian worldview not only deals with matters of objective truth, but also informs the way we are to live in this world.

The core of a biblical worldview, of course, is the truth that Jesus Christ's life and death revealed God's love for the world. And that affects everything we think.

and do. So let's look at the first question. What is ultimate reality from the biblical worldview perspective? Yes, it is God. As James Sire says from *The Universe Next Door*, Theism, or Christian theism's prime ultimate reality, is the infinite personal God revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

Now, if you hold a worldview that does not believe in God, then obviously God cannot be ultimate reality.

Something else must be ultimate reality, and we'll see that in the other worldview.

The first humanity question, origin, where do we come from? We are created beings wonderfully made in the image of God.

That's where we come from. Identity. Who are we? As beings made in the image of God, we are creatures of supreme worth and dignity.

We are loved by Him, God, and endowed with certain God-given attributes.

rights and responsibilities we have a dual nature we have a body and a soul But we are also fallen creatures. The Westminster Short Catechism says our first parents being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created by sinning against God.

And the fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

But with the coming of Jesus as the perfect image of God, Christians are recreated and become conformed to Christ as an expression of his image.

with righteousness and holiness and knowledge. That's our identity. Jesus Christ is our identity. We are created in His image.

Other worldviews have other answers for humankind's identity. Meaning.

Why are we here? Seek first his kingdom and righteousness, Matthew tells us in Matthew 6.

Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

We're also here to share the good news, the gospel, and to be good and faithful stewards of his creation.

Morality, how ought we live? From the biblical worldview perspective, morality is based on God's nature, his holiness, righteousness.

perfect justice and mercy and love, et cetera. Morality is transcendent.

and absolute. We look to God for morality. We don't look inside ourselves for morality.

And since God first loved us, we should love him and others and do all that pleases him.

And the Westminster Shorter Catechism says, the duty which God requireth of man is obedience to his revealed will.

And finally, destination. Where are we going? God's infinite justice demands that he punish our sins, but because of his infinite love, he has taken the punishment upon himself.

So that leaves our destination in one of two places. If we are believers, those who put their faith in Christ, by faith alone, are destined for eternal salvation with him and his heavenly kingdom.

For those that are not believers, those who do not put their faith in Christ are destined for eternal separation from God.

But there is an eternal destination, one or the other, for everyone.

according to our worldview. Other worldviews, and the one that we'll see here shortly, has a very different view of humankind's destination.

Now every worldview has a big overarching story.

about reality. Sometimes it's called a grand narrative, as we see here, or sometimes it's called a metanarrative.

This is our biblical worldviews, big story or meta narrative.

Creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. That's the big story across scripture.

So we know where we came from, we know what happened when we disobeyed God, But God hasn't given up on us, and Jesus Christ came to save us.

And when he returns the second time, the heavens and earth will be restored and believers and non-believers will have their place in eternity.

That is our story.

But you'll be amazed at how different the stories are from worldview to worldview. And these big stories help explain how and why people think and act.

Well, let's look at one other worldview and I've chosen naturalism, and I'll explain what I mean by that, and compare its answers to those six big life questions with those that we just saw from a biblical worldview.

Let's first define what we mean by naturalism. It is a philosophical belief that everything arises from natural properties and causes.

Nature is the whole show. But what does that mean? That means that there is nothing supernatural.

There's nothing beyond this physical universe. Similarly, there is no soul or mind in people.

Miracles are rejected because the universe operates by laws of nature which cannot change.

And a naturalist is either an atheist who says there is no God or an agnostic who might say, well, I'm not sure if there's a God, but they live their lives as if there is no God. And we'll see what that means.

So the first question, what is ultimate reality from a naturalistic worldview? Well, based on what I just said, it's the universe.

Ultimate reality is the physical world, space, time, matter and energy, not God.

Origin, where do we humans come from? Here's what many naturalists would say. Humans are part of the vast universe, which is eternal or produced by eternal physical processes, and governed by natural laws. Space, time, matter, and energy are all that exist.

We humans are the result of the interplay of time and chance and matter that has resulted in life on our planet. We are products of the unguided, non-purposeful process of evolution.

Very different from being created in the image of God. Identity, who are we? The naturalist tells us our lives and identity are explained solely by the material forces of nature.

As best understood by science. And one of the questions that I did not choose to address was the knowledge question. Where do we gain our knowledge from? A naturalist would say that the primary source of knowledge about everything that we know comes from science.

They also say we are chemical products, but somehow we are also a higher social animal.

As social beings, they would say, we have a responsibility to each other to maximize human potential and the survivability of the species and the planet.

And to maximize the social good as defined by society.

They say we are evolving as a species both physically according to evolution but also morally, they believe, towards a more positive future. And I'll say a little bit more about that shortly.

Next question, meaning. Why are we here? It says here we are here by chance.

Therefore, there is no larger purpose or meaning apart from what we individually choose to make for ourselves.

God did not put us here. And God did not give us a purpose. There is no God. So therefore, we've got to decide what meaning and purpose is ourselves.

We produce meaning through the use of human reason. And meaning is defined as that which gives us pleasure.

Now atheists and naturalists may define pleasure in a lot of different ways, but ultimately it's what we as individuals seek for our own good. Morality, how ought we live? Well, we saw in the biblical worldview that God is the source of morality. He is truth and righteousness and good and mercy and so on.

But if there is no God, there are no moral absolutes. There is no ought, just is. Now, what do we mean by that? A naturalist should not tell someone that they ought to do something.

that this is important, that this is the right thing. Recall in a previous slide in identity, it said that As social beings, naturalists say we have a responsibility to each other to maximize human potential and the survivability of the species.

Well, that's an odd statement. But where does that come from? There are no moral absolutes. Somebody could just disagree with that statement about having responsibility to one another, and they can't be said to be wrong from this worldview.

because there is no outside standard for morality.

Ethics are situational and cultural. Whatever maximizes human pleasure they say, without hurting others, is worthy. Tolerance is to be supported. Well, that's another odd statement.

Tolerance is to be supportive. They're telling us what is absolutely right, this notion of tolerance, however they define it.

But again, there are no moral absolutes, so I'm not sure how they can tell us that that's what we ought to do.

Human reason, validated by science, is the best source to maximize the social good. All citizens must embrace these objectives.

Again, another ought statement. And then finally, destination. Where are we going? Well, naturalism will tell you death is the extinction of a person and that person's material chemicals and molecules and atoms go back to the cosmos from which they came from.

And there is no lasting consciousness. So when we physically die, according to this worldview, that's the end of our existence.

There is no afterlife. And if there's no afterlife, then there's no judgment and there's no reward.

Now, that has significant implications, that the people who do terrible things in this world during their lifetime, Society does not judge them from the biblical worldview, God will judge.

eventually judge them. But according to this worldview, there is no judgment.

But they tell us, however the species will live on, in terms of the future and continue to evolve. So we have a responsibility to those who come after us. Again, an odd statement.

that has no moral basis. But yet that's what their worldview says. Now we saw that Every worldview has a story. And we looked at the biblical worldviews, big story or meta narrative or grand narrative.

This is a depiction of naturalism's big story.

It starts with cosmic origins.

without intention in other words the universe begins and they may point to science and the big bang theory saying that's where the uniform universe began Or others may say that the universe has been here eternally. Again, everything is based on physical materialism.

There is no creator, no cosmic plan. Everything is governed by the laws of physics, plus chance, plus time.

This explains the universe and us, but clearly there is no design or purpose to reality.

Then along the way, life emerged. Life arose from non-life processes by chance and chemistry.

And consciousness supposedly emerged as well, simply from matter.

So humans eventually emerge as purposeless accidents. We evolve from nature. Naturalism says we are descendants of chimpanzees.

where not only late arrivals in the universe's development, But there's nothing special about us either. We are purposeless accidents with no soul and no afterlife. So what's the end of the story? It's meaningless. It's a final doom. Science, the primary source of knowledge for naturalists, says the universe will continue to expand until, according to the second law of thermodynamics, it cools down and our sun and all other stars burn out and all usable energy disappears.

The universe then becomes dark and cold and can no longer support life. Humankind will eventually become extinct.

how different this story is from the biblical world view and how differently naturalist must think and act as a result If you do not believe you have any purpose or ultimate meaning in this world and you disappear when you die, The moral and ethical implications are significant. You logically live to maximize your own personal desires.

over those of others. Here's just one slide brief comparison of the ethical implications of the two worldviews.

And much more discussion would be required in each of these areas, but I'll just share them with you briefly.

So on the ethics side of the house, if we wanna answer the question, what is the source of morality from each of the two worldviews? The biblical worldview says the source of morality is God himself, his character.

Naturalism says there is no God, so therefore morality must come from human processes. Either society decides what's morally right, through their own processes, or each person decides what's right.

obligation. So what's the sense of obligation that we have towards the morals and the ethics? Well, under a biblical worldview, these are objective standards and we must live up to those. We are obligated to live up to God's values, to Christ-like values. On the naturalism side of the house, since there are no objective transcendent values, then there is no obligation. Society may say you're obligated. The naturalists say you're obligated to help others.

But that can be conditional. The individual can decide under certain circumstances they don't want to do that.

And that is logically okay under this worldview. Accountability, are we accountable for how we perform and live up to the moral and ethical standards. Yes, in the biblical worldview, there's ultimate accountability. We will answer to the Lord.

Since there is no Lord on the naturalistic side of the house, there could be, maybe usually are, social consequences of failing to live up to whatever that culture or society says is morally and ethically correct. Human worth.

How do we address the issue of human worth from both perspectives? Well, there's human worth inherently in who we are because we are created in the image of God.

And as I suggested earlier, that has implications when it comes to abortion and assisted suicide and euthanasia.

But naturalism, there is no inherent worth. Worth is assigned either by us individually or by the culture.

So in that pantheistic Hindu situation, the worth of those untouchables, the lower class is much less than that of those in the upper class. Now that's not naturalism, but that's another example of a different worldview's definition of human worth.

There's a class society.

where the poor in biblical worldview and the rich are both created in the image of God and both have are worth, both have human worth. Flexibility, is there flexibility according to the morals and ethics in the biblical worldview? Well, it says limited here, Ultimately, there is no flexibility. God provides, tells us what the morals and values are.

The limited notion here, I suspect, really refers to in this fallen world, ethical situations are oftentimes unclear.

And oftentimes we're given choices, very limited choices, and both choices are not good.

And so there is room under that set of circumstances to to have some flexibility on how you're going to live up to or not live up to certain values.

However, on the naturalist side of the house, there's extreme flexibility. Since there are no absolute objective moral values, living in this world and the ethical challenges that you have, you have high flexibility.

And what about costly virtue? Will it cost you to live up to these values? Well, in the biblical worldview, all we have to do is look to the disciples, look to Jesus Christ, who lived according to Christian values.

And what happened to them? They paid for it with their lives, okay? But were required to do so.

However, under the naturalistic worldview, not so much. Maybe to use a military example, If soldiers are in a foxhole or in a trench and the enemy throws a hand grenade into that foxhole or trench, Someone who holds a biblical worldview is probably more likely to jump on that hand grenade and die in order to save others. Why? Because that is a value. You're saving human sanctity.

saving the lives of others, but that biblical worldview person also has a view of eternity and knows that his life does not end at that moment.

I would think from a logical, naturalistic perspective, a soldier would not jump on a hand grenade Instead, all those soldiers holding a naturalistic worldview would be more inclined, logically at least, to run from the hand grenade.

and not save others. Because if your life ends upon death, why would you do that? At least from a logical perspective.

How might we summarize the two? Well, the biblical ethic might be described as be good because it is true, even if it costs you.

The naturalistic ethic says be good, although it's not clear what we mean by good.

As long as it works for you. Well, I guess we do know what mean good mean, whatever good means for you.

talked earlier on about christian values and i think i want to finish up here with with a review, if anything, of our Christian biblical worldview values.

Love God, he reigns supreme, the great commandment. And the second commandment is like it, love your neighbor as yourself.

And do not murder, steal, lie, and the other commandments from the Ten Commandments. And then many of these values listed here that come from the fruit of the Spirit.

Overall, though, I think we could sum it up is we want to be, we must be like Christ. That's who we emulate.

He is the ultimate exemplar of God.

what values and morals are and what it means to live as a believer.

References. I said we had four references and you see them here.

I've mentioned or quoted from several of those. Obviously, we talked about the Universe Next Door, the Worldview catalog.

And I quoted from the first reference up above, can sample the authors, but the two others here, Christian Worldview Handbook, which I mentioned, and then also the Worldview Study Bible. Let me share that with you briefly.

The Christian Worldview Handbook. 100 plus short articles addressing topics shown here.

Over 100 topics, and you see some of the topics that are listed here. Because there's so many addressed, that they don't go into a lot of depth. So you get a sense of all the topics and areas that worldviews embrace.

Just five are shown here, but look down at the bottom. Leadership and biblical ethics is discussed and ethics of personal evangelism.

and the other reference, the Worldview Study Bible.

125, over 125 short worldview articles placed throughout scripture next to related passages.

Again, I highly recommend these four references for deeper study into worldviews.

And finally, before I close, let me share and recommend a group or individual exercise that will help your worldview understanding.

The purpose of this exercise is to understand competing non-biblical worldviews in your own culture.

and some of its ethical implications that likely will differ from yours.

So here's my suggestion about how you go about doing that. Number one, As a group or individually identify a significant non-biblical worldview or religion in your country.

Then select the big life or worldview questions to be asked of this worldview.

Now I would recommend that you use the same six questions that we used in this lesson.

because you're somewhat familiar with them. But you had 11 or 12 to choose from earlier slides.

then answer the questions from a biblical worldview perspective.

Then answer the questions from the non-biblical worldview's perspective and compare and contrast the answers with the biblical worldview.

just like we did with the biblical worldview and naturalism.

Then discuss, have a discussion about the main values and ethical implications of each worldview. Compare and contrast the values and implications.

ethical implications of each.

This concludes the lesson. I pray that this lesson will be useful to you in your future studies of ethics.

and in your everyday life. So thanks for your time and your attention. God bless you all.