

Discerning Worldviews

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I Introduction to the Art of Discernment

- A. We are made in the image of God – Logos - *A full expression of ideas*; (quote) PP 1-4
 - 1. Ge. 1:1-3 – *God created, Spirit moved (vibrated), Son spoke into existence*
 - 2. Ge. 2:7 – *Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground (body), breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (spirit); and man became a living soul.*
 - 3. One of the things that makes mankind unique is the ability to reason logically
 - 4. Gordon Clark defined logic as *the science of necessary inference* as well as noting that the word and the science of logic is a derivative of Logos. (see quotes)
- B. The Bible tells us that discernment is a mark of maturity in believers – PP 5
 - 1. Hebrews 5:12-14 – *those of full age have minds exercised to discern good from evil*
 - a. A “babe” is only ready for milk (easily digested); not skilled in righteousness
 - b. Those of “full age” (mature – teleios - #5049 – *completely, to the end*)
 - c. The word for mind – “canal” – thought-pattern – for the river of the Spirit
 - 2. Romans 12:2 – *be transformed by the renewing of your mind...*
 - 3. Ephesians 4:22-24 – *put off old, renewed in the spirit of your mind, put on new*
- C. The meaning of discernment and discussion – PP 6-9
 - 1. While it is true that believers ought to *listen* to all points of view and be willing to discuss these respectfully (grace), truth is the clarity to define ideas Biblically.
 - 2. To discern is to *distinguish* in order to *examine* ideas of what is true.
 - 3. Tim Challies’ definition of discernment *is the skill of understanding and applying God’s Word with the purpose of separating truth from error and right from wrong.*
 - 4. See the definitions of discernment from Vine and discuss from Webster.
 - 5. A picture of discernment/discussion is parable of the mustard seed (Mt. 13:31-32)
 - a. Least of all seeds in comparison to its influence – *greater* than herbs (individual)
 - b. The birds of the air come and nest in its branches – all ideas are sheltered...
 - c. *A believer should not be intimidated by false ideas but instead welcomes a discussion of them with the purpose of influencing others with the truth!*
- D. Judgment and Condemnation – Matthew 7:1-5 – PP 10-11
 - 1. We must judge ideas in Scripture (directly or by reason - quote Challies)
 - 2. Condemnation - attitude of pride - your opinion binding (beyond Scripture)
 - 3. The Bible tells us to respect another’s freedom of thought:
 - a. Ro. 1-2; 1st Cor. 10:29,32 - all people have wisdom from God in their conscience
 - b. Pr. 26:4-5 – don’t answer another according to their argument (their premise)

II Discerning Worldviews – PP 12-

- A. What is a worldview? (see quote from Katherine Gallagher – *Worldview*)
 - 1. *A worldview is the lens by which we view life and the priorities of certain ideas.*
 - 2. Everyone has a worldview, whether they are aware of it or not.
- B. A **worldview** consists of...
 - 1. Premises or basic assumptions that we make, whether understood or not
 - 2. Syllogisms or the “due process of reasoning” from a premise to a conclusion
 - 3. Conclusions – the effect of reasoning from presuppositions consistently

4. Non-Biblical worldviews - faulty premises and conclusions (see Meyer chart)
 - a. No worldview can sustain itself consistently without borrowing from the Bible
 - b. Worldviews have religious premises and a form of government (Walton chart)
5. False reasoning – the enemy corrupts logic to deceive us (see list of fallacies)
 - a. Ge. 3:1 - Hide the premise – *has God said?* (Loaded question / Ad Hominem)
 - b. 3:4 - False conclusion (reject God) – *You shall not surely die* (Genetic fallacy)
 - c. 3:5 - Distort the reasoning – *You will be as gods* (Straw Man)
 - d. Note: The Devil borrowed from God’s worldview; he ***distorts***, does not create
- C. **Tools** for discerning worldviews – 2nd Corinthians 10
 1. Listen to others - grace (benefit of the doubt) and truth (timely boldness)
 - a. We can reason properly but to the wrong conclusion if the premise is fallacious
 - c. Many believers do not have a Biblical worldview, letting others reason for them
 - d. Inadequate worldviews produce unfulfilled lives, which is why it is good to *ask questions* of the other person’s worldview to see if it is working
 1. Do you think you need a God who loves you unconditionally?
 2. Do you think your worldview is transcendent – consistent throughout history?
 2. Reason in love, share, don’t preach or condescend others, you will learn as well
 - a. Don’t manipulate and use fallacies yourself (moving in the flesh)
 - b. The Spirit of God will give you the “pathway” to the heart of another
 - c. Learning weaknesses in your worldview will help you grow in how to express it
 - d. A “stronghold” is a thought pattern – like a fortress – with “spirits”
 3. The heart, with the Spirit of God, brings revelation
 4. Avoid judging by outward appearance alone – discern heart motives
 5. It is important to “stay in your lane” – where you are confident, don’t meddle
 6. Our involvement is in proportion to the level of covenant we have with another
- D. **Attitudes** for discerning worldviews - 1st Peter 3:15 – *sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience...*
 1. It begins with a sanctified heart – do you have a pure attitude to help another?
 2. Be ready (prepared) – are you really ready to study another’s point of view?
 3. Have you been invited to discuss it? To all who ask implies a relationship
 4. Are you discussing in meekness (meekness), admitting you are learning also?
 5. Are you discussing with the fear (and reverence for God, listening to Him)
 6. Do you have a pure conscience? (right with God and the other person)
 7. ***You don’t have to win the argument to win the person.***
- E. **An example** of reasoning – the Apostle Paul on Mars Hill – Acts 17:22-34
 1. He acknowledged their religion – I noticed your monument “to an unknown God”
 2. The nature of God (creator) – He is the one you really long for but can be known
 3. The nature of truth (sovereign) – God doesn’t need anything, but is Lord of all
 4. The nature of man (seek God) – Your own poets have said man is in need of God
 5. The nature of history (providential) – God pre-determined times and boundaries
 6. The nature of sin (repentance) – God’s grace allows man time to repent
 7. The nature of judgment (account) – There is a day coming where all will be judged
 8. Jesus and the resurrection (gospel) – He raised Christ from the dead!