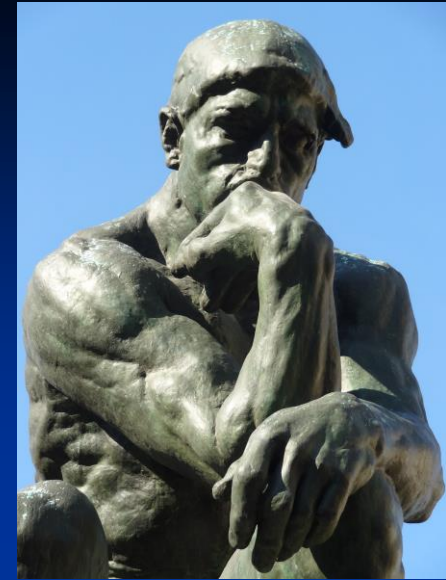


# Discerning Worldviews



# God created Men and Women to Reason



Genesis 2:7 - *The 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.*



# On the meaning of the Greek word Logos

*Jesus is the logos of God. This Greek word, most often translated word in the New Testament, means literally a collecting, collection yet it has many wide applications. Among these is speech that embraces language itself and all of its wide expressions of ideas. It also embraces reason, or the mental faculty of thinking, meditating and musing. It is literally an expression of the divine mind, or divine reasoning. Logos denotes the essential Word of God, i.e., the personal (hypostatic) wisdom and power in union with God.*

(Jehle, Paul, *Go Ye Therefore and Teach*, Vol. I – p. 531; from Thayer's *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, by Joseph Thayer, Baker Book House, 1977, pages 380-382)

# Gordon Clark on the meaning of Logos

*Logic is the study of the methods by which the conclusion is proved beyond all doubt. Given the truth of the premises the conclusion must be true. In technical language, logic is the science of necessary inference... Logic will not guarantee the truth of the premises, but without logic no progress is possible... The well-known prologue to John's Gospel may be paraphrased, 'in the beginning was Logic, and Logic was with God, and Logic was God.... In Logic was life and the life was the light of men.'*

(Clark, Gordon, Logic, The Trinity Foundation, 1988, pages 1, 116, 120-121.)

# Discernment is a mark of Maturity in Believers

Hebrews 5:12-14 – *For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses (minds) exercised to discern both good and evil.*

Romans 12:2 – *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...*

Ephesians 4:23 – *be renewed in the spirit of your mind...*

# The Meaning of Discernment in the NT

## Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words

*[A-1, Verb, G350, anakrino] to distinguish, or separate out so as to investigate (krino) by looking throughout (ana, intensive) objects or particulars," hence signifies "to examine, scrutinize, question, to hold a preliminary judicial examination preceding the trial proper" (this first examination, implying more to follow, is often present in the nonlegal uses of the word)*

(Note the meaning is to examine an idea  
in order to distinguish its legitimacy)

# Webster's 1828 - the Meaning of Discuss

*Verb transitive [Latin], to drive; to beat or to shake in pieces; to separate by beating or shaking.*

*1. To disperse; to scatter; to dissolve; to repel; as, to discuss a tumor; a medical use of the word.*

*2. To debate; to agitate by argument; to clear of objections and difficulties, with a view to find or illustrate truth; to sift; to examine by disputation; to ventilate; to reason on, for the purpose of separating truth from falsehood. We discuss a subject, a point, a problem, a question, the propriety, expedience or justice of a measure, etc.*

# Tim Challies on Discernment

*When we defined discernment... we reached the unavoidable conclusion that discerning is closely related to judging. As we discern between what is good and evil and between what is right and wrong we necessarily make judgments. We weigh evidence in the balance and decide what represents truth and what represents falsehood. But judging is not popular in our culture. The phrase 'Don't judge me!' is seen as an inviolable mantra in this postmodern society. We live in a culture that teaches we can and should do whatever makes us happy and that no one has the right to hold up to any standard but our own. Judging is the great sin of postmodernism.* (Challies, Tim, *The Discipline of Spiritual Discernment*, Crossway Books, 2007, page 74)



# A Picture of Kingdom Discussion: The parable of the Mustard Seed



*A mature believer has no fear of entertaining all kinds of ideas, giving debate and discussion shade in order to discern truth!*

Matthew 13:31-32 - *The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.*

# Judgment vs. Condemnation – Matthew 7:1-5

*Matthew 7:1-5 – Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.*

We see clearly here that Jesus does not forbid judgment, but rather He forbids the improper *attitude* of superiority!

# Freedom of Thought – a mark of Liberty

- God tells us to respect others and their freedom of thought
  - Romans 1 and 2 delineate that all people have some wisdom of God in their conscience – *“show the work of the law in hearts”*
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:29,32 – *“Conscience,” I say, not your own, but that of the other... give no offense... to the Jews, Greeks or Church*
  - Proverbs 26:4-5 – don’t answer another according to their own argument (their premise; but you can help them see its folly)
- Don’t turn your opinions (personal convictions that go beyond the direct commands of Scripture) into judgments



# Why do believers need to study Worldview?

*Worldview is the study and understanding of our beliefs about life and the universe and how we acquire them... Once we have decided to follow Jesus, He begins to change our hearts and give us discernment for our decisions. However, our former thinking is not automatically brought into alignment with the Word and character of God. We are responsible for evaluating our worldview and aligning it with God's principles. This means you can be saved and not necessarily have a Christian worldview... Our worldview is the set of personal beliefs and assumptions (presuppositions) we hold about society, culture, and the world around us, which determine our view of reality. (Gallagher, Katherine, Worldview, [www.gostrategic.com](http://www.gostrategic.com); 2023, p. 2-3)*



# What is a Worldview?

- Premises or basic assumptions, everyone has a worldview
- Syllogisms - a process of reasoning from premise to conclusion
- Conclusions – reasoning from presuppositions consistently
- Non-Biblical worldviews - faulty premises and conclusions
  - See the Understanding the Times chart of popular worldviews
  - No worldview can sustain itself consistently without borrowing from God, the Bible or Christianity
  - All worldviews have religious premises and a form of government
  - See the Fundamentals for American Christians chart on government

# The Devil's Fallacies

- Genesis 3:1 – *Has God indeed said, ‘you shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’*
  - Hide premise - Assumption – *loaded question*
  - Red Herring – *Ad Hominem* – *attack opponent*
- 3:3 – Eve adds “nor touch it” – takes bait
- 3:4 – *You shall not surely die* - reject God
  - False conclusion by *genetic fallacy*
- 3:5 – *You shall be as gods* – distort reason
  - Red Herring – *straw man* – exaggeration
  - Assumption – *equivocation* – “right & wrong”



The Devil had to begin with God's Worldview and seek to corrupt it by utilizing sinful desires and reasoning

# TOOLS for Discerning Worldviews – 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 10

- LISTEN – grace (benefit of the doubt) and truth (timely)
  - Be quick to hear, slow to speak – James 1:19
  - Good reasoning on wrong premises lead to wrong conclusions
  - Often believers don't have a Biblical worldview, let others reason
  - Inadequate worldviews produce unfulfilled lives (Dudley Hall)
  - It is good to ask questions such of the other's worldview:
- Do you need a God who loves you unconditionally?
- Do you think your worldview is transcendent and produced good results throughout history?

# TOOLS for Discerning Worldviews – 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 10

- REASON in love – share, don't preach or condescend
- Don't manipulate and use fallacies yourself (in the flesh)
- The Holy Spirit will give you a “pathway” to the heart of another individual, helping them see a “stronghold”
- Be aware, the Spirit will also show you, in your discussion, how your own worldview is inconsistent or built in pride
- A stronghold can, over time, can be a habitation of “spirits”
- REVELATION will come about the condition of hearts



# TOOLS for Discerning Worldviews – 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 10

- JUDGE righteously, and not merely by outward appearance
- The Spirit of God will help you discern motives
- Stay in your lane – don't let confidence become presumption
- Don't meddle in areas where you have little or no expertise
- Admit your need to research more and desire to be clear
- Remember, the DURATION of your discussion will be in proportion to your relationship with the individual – don't push, but be ready to continue with respect and humility

# ATTITUDES for Discerning Worldviews

1<sup>st</sup> 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*

- SANCTIFY the Lord God in your HEART
  - Have you prayed and asked God for the right heart attitude?
  - Do you truly want Him to get the glory?
- Are you willing to STUDY the other person's worldview?
- Are you TRAINING yourself in a Biblical worldview?

# ATTITUDES for Discerning Worldviews

1<sup>st</sup> 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*

- Is the other person WILLING to discuss with you?
  - If they are willing, it implies a relationship of some kind
- Are you discussing in MEEKNESS, admit you are learning
- Are you embracing the FEAR OF GOD? (listening to Him)
- Are you right with God and others – a pure CONSCIENCE?
- *You don't have to win the argument to win the person!*



# Paul on Mars Hill (Areopagus) – Acts 17:22-34



- He acknowledged their religion
- The nature of God (creator)
- The nature of truth (sovereign)
- The nature of man (seek God)
- The nature of history (providential)
- The nature of sin (repentance)
- The nature of judgment (account)
- Jesus and the resurrection (gospel)