

Apologetics Table of Contents

18 lessons

15 lessons expected to be taught 3 extra in case more material is needed.

1. **Apologetics 101:** What is “Apologetics?” - 2 Peter 3:15 (dealing with critical thinking, asking questions, and discernment - what’s wrong with questioning everything? Truth has nothing to fear. If that is true, why don’t we ask the questions and give the answers?)
2. **Language part 1:** Leveling the **linguistic** playing field: Words matter - Watching out for the redefinition of words (Fred Flintstone had a gay old time!)
3. **Language part 2:** Leveling the **linguistic** playing field: Words matter - Watching out for the redefinition of words (Fred Flintstone had a gay old time!)
4. **Self-help:** Faith and belief lead to success, happiness, and power...but faith and belief in YOURSELF is humanism.
5. **Naturalism:** “Faith is believing what you know ain’t so.”¹ Everything in this world can be explained by science and nothing else. - Yeah, right!
6. **Skepticism:** Give me the Bible...wait, how much of the Bible includes things that cannot be measured, counted, or physically experimented on? Therefore, it must be false, right?
7. **Postmodernism:** There is no truth except mine. Maybe we should have listened to Jesus about that foundation thing (Matthew 7:24-26).
8. **Moral Relativism:** Our current social experiment is, “Let’s see what happens when you always put emotions in charge.”
9. **Emotionalism:** What happens when we replace our logic with emotions? Lead with the heart and not with the mind.
10. **Pluralism:** Worship something, someone, anything - just don’t forget about tolerance.
11. **New Spirituality:** Just a woke way of saying idolatry - Buddha teaching about self-control.
12. **Marxism:** “Change the environment, give people everything they need, and they’ll all be noble and will work hard for the benefit of society.” This does not account for sin and the cure for it.
13. **Feminism:** The war on men and men are too afraid to fight back!
14. **Progressive Christianity:** Mom and dad’s religion is antiquated, it’s time for a makeover and I have some ideas. Let’s set the Bible aside for a bit. (Danger! Danger! Danger!)

¹ Mark Twain

15. What are the consequences of **atheism**? Why make such a big deal over this? I'm 60+ years old and survived.
16. How can God allow **suffering**? Really? John 3:16
17. How can a good God allow **evil**? Keyword "**GOOD.**"
18. How can a good God send people to **hell**? Who is sending whom?

If we do not believe in the creation as taught in Genesis 1 and 2, we will not accept the redemption of the Savior, nor will we believe in the destruction of the world as taught by the Word of God. Everything either stands or falls on the faith that God created the heavens and the earth!

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Lesson 1: Apologetics 101

What is apologetics?

I'm sorry. That was the first thought that came to mind when I first saw the topic on my syllabus, the word "Apologetics." I knew preachers sometimes get a big head and need to learn humility, but six weeks to learn how to apologize? I was the one who admitted ignorance; the rest chuckled and faked ignorance.

So what is apologetics? Theological dictionaries and encyclopedias do not attempt to give us simple down-to-the-common people-level definitions. Notice these two definitions:

- "The branch of theological science which sets out to vindicate 'Christian theism against any form of non-theistic or non-Christian thought.'" (Cornelius Van Til).
- "a verbal defence against a verbal attack, a disproving of a false accusation, or a justification of an action or line of conduct wrongly made the object of censure." (Aiken)

How can the average person grasp this? But there is no need to fear; there is a simpler definition.

First of all, *apologetics* comes from the word *apologia*, and it looks very similar to our English word *apology*. Several Bible passages use the Greek word *apologia* or a form of it, and it has nothing to do with an apology. **It involves "defending" or presenting a "defense."** The most common scripture used when talking about apologetics is **1 Peter 3:15**.



Scripture:

"but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a **defense** (*apologia*) to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence" (1 Peter 3:15)

Definition:

In ancient Greece, a lawyer would make an "APOLOGIA" on behalf of his client. **Apologetics means making a defense for the hope or faith that is in you - or defending what you believe.**

Bible people who were apologists:

- **Jesus** (John 5:17-47). He was speaking to a group of hostile Jews about His Father and His equality to Him, thus saying that He was equal to the Father. "If I bear witness of myself, My witness is not true...". In other words, If I say that I am equal to My Father without proof - just saying something without evidence doesn't make it so; real evidence must be offered (5:31). Jesus proceeds to



offer them four lines of evidence: **(1)** the testimony of John the Baptizer (1:23-29) who testified, “that Jesus was “the Lord,” and “Who takes away the sin of the world.” **(2)** Second, the miracles Jesus worked in the presence of witnesses, many of whom were present that day. No other man could do what Jesus had done, was doing, and would continue to do. **(3)** God the Father testified that Jesus was His Son. (The Father spoke both through the prophets, as well as on His own from heaven at Jesus’ baptism.). **(4)** Finally, Jesus defended His deity by pointing to the fact that the Old Testament Scriptures supernaturally foretold of Him—predicting His birth, life, death, resurrection, and much more.

- **This was not the only time** Jesus gave a defense. Remember when He turned water into wine, fed the 5000, healed the blind man, raised Lazarus, healed the nobleman’s son from a distance, healed an invalid of 38 years being infirmed, walked on water, His victorious death, His resurrection, and His catching of a great number of fish after being dead!
- **Mark 2:10-11**
- **John 2:18-21**
- **John 10:36-38**
- **John 15:24**
- **John 20:24-29**



- **Paul** is probably one of the most well-known apologists in the New Testament.
 - Acts 17:2-4; “for three Sabbaths **reasoned** with them from the Scriptures, **explaining** and **giving evidence** that the ***Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead***, and saying, “This **Jesus** whom I am proclaiming to you **is the Christ.**”
 - Acts 17:17; “So he was **reasoning** in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present.”
 - Acts 17:22-31



- **Peter’s** early sermons in Acts were full of evidence. Notice that his apologetics was from historical evidence as well as eye-witness testimony.
 - Acts 2:14-39 - Pentecost sermon
 - Acts 3:11-4:4 - Temple beggar
 - Acts 4:8-12 - After his first arrest
 - Acts 5:29-32 - After his second arrest
 - Acts 10:34-43 - At the house of Cornelius
 - Five themes connect all the sermons, but one thread is woven throughout - Jesus is the Christ!
 - An introduction to his audience
 - The audience had “killed Jesus” - guilt
 - God has the last word by “raising him from the dead”



- Jesus has been exalted and is the coming Judge
- Now is the time to repent and be baptized so that they might have forgiveness of sins and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- **Stephen** preached a historical sermon and finished it with evidence that angered the audience to the point of murder. “Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it.” (Acts 7:52-55)

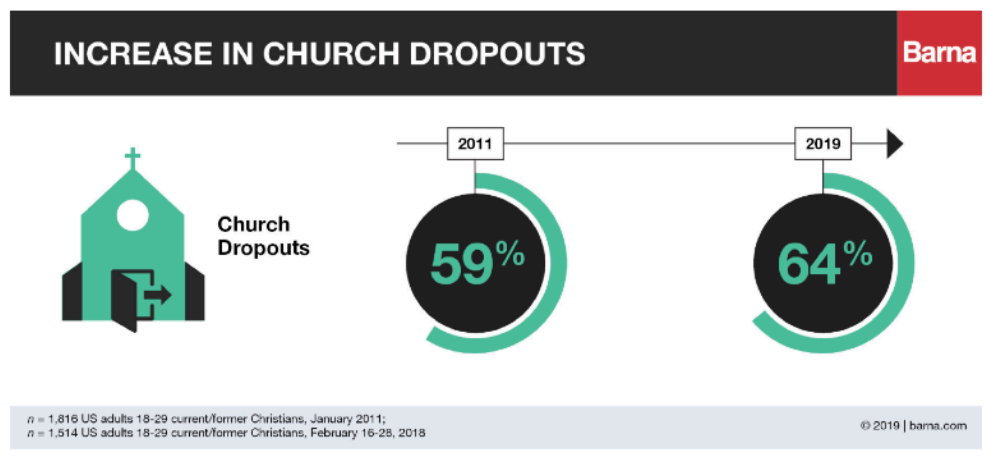


Why Study Apologetics?

1. There is a need for a firm foundation - Matthew 7:24-27



Jesus’ parable about building on a solid foundation is powerful for this study. Have you ever wondered why our children who grow up in the church, attend VBS, and Bible camps, become Christians, and show every sign of spiritual growth and dedication end up becoming a part of what the Barna Researchers call the Youth Exodus? “Nearly two-thirds of U.S. 18–29-year-olds who grew up in church tell Barna they have withdrawn from church involvement as an adult after having been active as a child or teen.” (Barna Group). The polling research reveals that three foundational pillars of faith are the reason for these young adults leaving their faith: God, the inspiration of the Bible, and the resurrection of Jesus.



For too long, we have assumed and taken for granted that our children “just” believe in God, the Bible, and Jesus’ resurrection because they seemed engaged for many years.

- Children’s faith is under assault, and for the sake of their spiritual future.

- Your faith is under assault, and for the sake of your spiritual future.
 - Later in this study, you will see how the postmodern movement has influenced even you.
- The future of the next generation is at stake.
 - Colossians 2:8
 - 1 Timothy 6:20-21
 - Proverbs 22:6
- We are in a battle of the mind
 - Ephesians 6:12; “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.”



2. God commands us to make a defense of the hope in us - 1 Peter 3:15



- Christians will be faced with the opportunity to speak about their faith with people who either don't believe or persecute (to whatever degree). Every Christian should be able to give a reasoned defense of their hope in Christ, especially in hopeless situations. When a Christian behaves with faith and hope, unbelievers will take notice.
- Peter reminds us to make our defense in meekness and fear (respect). No one likes a know-it-all. We are defending our faith and our hope, not prosecuting anyone. Additionally, we must make sure we are living what we believe in and hope for. Our desire is not to win an argument but to win lost souls.

3. Apologetics is evangelism

- Making a defense does not mean fighting but teaching. When Jesus and the apostles engaged in apologetics, their goal was to convince and convict and lead people to Christ. Our goal should be the same.
 - 1 Corinthians 9:22 - we must learn the culture - what people believe - and meet people where they are.
 - Acts 17
 - Romans 12:1-2 - Careful never to be conformed to the world.
 - Acts 18:4 - Paul reasoned in the synagogue at Corinth and understood the people and their culture.
 - Acts 24:25 - Felix



4. Persecution



- “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who **suppress the truth in unrighteousness.**” (Romans 1:18)

We are living in an age when Christianity and religion are being attacked in many directions. In some countries, Christians are being murdered because of their faith. In our country, the media, sitcoms, universities, and even the government are attacking our faith.

Why is this happening? Paul explains it in Romans 1

- Vs. 18 - people suppress the truth in unrighteousness
- Vs. 21 - society knew who God was, but did not honor Him as God and became useless and foolish
- Vs. 22 - they carried themselves as wise, but in truth, they were fools
- Vs 23 - as a result, they decided to exchange the One and Only True God and in their foolishness began to worship trees, rocks, lizards, snakes, and other crazy things



- Vs. 24 - since society refused to worship God, suppressed the truth, and decided to go their way without God, God let them do what they wanted.
- Vs. 26 & 27 - they went from bad to worse and committed vile, immoral sins
- Vs. 28 - society refused to acknowledge God, and in response, God gave them over to their depraved (stupid) minds
- Vss. 29-32; “being **filled** with **all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and **although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.**”**
- If a society is all of the above, then how do we expect Christians will be treated?

Final thoughts

- “Error is usually a coward when it comes to honest investigation. The individual who realizes that he stands on sand or shaky ground will not want “to come to

the light" to have his belief and practices thoroughly investigated. But such is not so with the lover and doer of truth. Truth has absolutely nothing to fear from investigation. The man who has built upon the rock will never fear discussion, argumentation, or debating of his beliefs and practices. He is always ready and willing to "contend for the faith." (Jude 3) He is set to defend the gospel (Philippians 1:15-18) and is never ashamed of it (Rom 1:16). The truth-lover stands up for Christ and His Gospel under all circumstances. He will not compromise for the sake of popularity for peace. Though he is a lover of peace and unity, he will not forsake truth to obtain them. He understands that peace and unity must have God's Word as its basis." (Shannon)

- Not everyone will be accepting of our defense. That is o.k. Jesus was ultimately murdered on the cross, and some say Peter was crucified upside down for his Christian defense (Stevenson). Paul was beheaded in Rome for his convictions about Christ, the inspired Word, and the resurrection (ibid). Never forget that our duty is to plant the seed and allow God to give the increase. Not every heart (soil) is ready to receive the seed, and not every heart that does receive the seed is ready to allow it to grow. However, there will be some sensible hearts who have been searching for the truth that makes sense, and they will be the ones who will be grateful.

Apologetics 101 Questions

1. Imagine you had to explain apologetics to a friend. In your own words, explain the concept of apologetics and give one example of apologetics.
 - Apologetics is...

 - One example of apologetics is the resurrection of Jesus, and the evidence or proof is the empty tomb and many witnesses.

 - Another example of apologetics is...

2. When it comes to teaching children the difference between right and wrong thinking, parents usually use one of three approaches (Ferrer):
 - Reactionary - take action after the problem arises - the child has grown up and no longer believes in God
 - Responsive - take action while the problem is taking place - the teenager tells his father that everyone is entitled to their own truth based on what they feel is truth
 - Anticipatory - take action before it happens - parents try to anticipate every question, issue, and/or problem that may arise as the child grows up, living by *"Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he grows older he will not abandon it."* (Proverbs 22:6)

 - Why do you think many parents default to the reactionary approach?

- While it is more difficult to use the anticipatory approach, what are some advantages of taking this path?
3. In making decisions, we either use emotions (heart) or knowledge (head), or, in some cases, both. Do you tend to rely more on one or both? Why do you think that is?
4. In what ways have you **personally** experienced the youth exodus? What do you think contributed to the exodus?
5. Read the following scriptures and explain how they relate to our study:
- Colossians 2:8

 - 1 Timothy 6:20-21

 - Proverbs 22:6

- 2 Corinthians 10:5

- 1 Peter 3:15

- Jude 3

6. Given 1 Peter 3:15, Christians are commanded to be ready to give a defense of the hope that is in us. Read the scripture, outline the command **AND** attitude we are to give the defense. These additional scriptures may help you: Philippians 1:9-10; Colossians 4:6; Hebrews 5:14). Remember that giving a defense means providing evidence and proof.

Lessons 2 & 3: Leveling The Linguistic Playing Field

Words Matter!

Boy, do words matter! I had my first experience in grade school, 1982, to be exact. The school year was about to begin, and I asked my mother for a new lunch box. I had my heart set on a Knight Rider, E.T., or Superman lunchbox. However, my heart was shattered when mom showed up with a garage sale find, the Hanna-Barbera Flintstones lunch box. Mother was sure I would love it - it was in mint condition! Emblazoned in bold letters was part of the Flintstone theme song: "Have a yabba-dabba-doo time, A dabba-doo time, We'll have a gay old time!" The first day of 5th grade was interesting.

That day, I learned that "gay" was not always a word meaning homosexual but that it once meant happiness. That was my introduction to what is now known as **linguistic theft**. The idea of **"purposefully hijacking words, changing their definitions, and then using those same words as tools of propaganda."** (Ferrer)

Linguistic theft is nothing new. George Orwell's Novel 1984 (written in 1949) described a utopian society (perfect society) where the government and politicians used a new way of speaking called "NewSpeak." Newspeak is a language "designed to diminish the range of thought." (Orwell). This Newspeak language would be used to control the people and every institution by hijacking the language and stripping the words of their original meaning, i.e., "war is peace, freedom is slavery, and ignorance is strength." (Ibid)

Before we look at a list of words that have been hijacked and given a different meaning, and as a result, made the majority of Christians homophobic, racist, evil, and mean in a matter of two or three years (tongue in cheek), we need to look at and understand what **subjective** and **objective truth** is.

1. The Devil, the master of subjective truth

The devil convinced Eve to question God's truth (objective) and replace it with her truth (subjective). This is what we would call **objective** and **subjective** truth.

- **The objective truth** (statement) is factual; it has a definite correspondence to reality, independent of anyone's feelings or biases - at one time, it was just called truth. (Example: If someone says, "Disney World is in Orlando, Florida," that is objective truth, it is verifiable, and it has nothing to do with emotions or biases.)

- **Subjective truth** is based on opinions, emotions, and biases, and there is no way to measure that statement against reality; it cannot be evaluated apart from other people's opinions. (Example: Someone may say, "Disney World is the most amazing theme park in the world!" How can one prove this claim? If one were to poll 100 people, the answers may differ.)



- **2 Corinthians 11:3-4**; *"But I am afraid that, as the **serpent deceived Eve** by his **craftiness**, your **minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity** of devotion to Christ. For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully."*

- Simplicity means *sincerity, singleness of devotion.*
- Satan has several devices for attacking Christians :
 - He can burden the consciences of believers who have sinned (2 Cor. 2:10-11)
 - Blind the minds of unbelievers (2 Cor. 4:4)
 - Beguile the minds of believers (2 Cor. 11:3)
 - Attack God's ministers (2 Cor. 12:7)



- The focus here is on the mind; Satan is a **liar** and tries to get us to listen to his lies, ponder them, and then believe them.
 - First, he *questioned* God's word ("Yea, hath God said?") - Objective truth
 - Then he *denied* God's word ("Ye shall not surely die!"),
 - Then he *substituted his own lie* ("Ye shall be as gods") (Gen. 3:1, 4-5) - Subjective truth

The **objective truth** was based on what God had said; it was not based on human emotions, it was not biased, and it was based on a solid foundation. The **subjective truth** was based on a lie. Satan could not be trusted, and there was no reason to trust him. But he convinced Eve based on loose words, flattery, and empty promises. In other words, the masses seem to appreciate more subjective truth because it is **relative**...It is my truth and your truth, whatever makes you happy (more on relative truth later). *Romans 1:18; "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness..."*

2. Words are just words, so who cares?



John 1:1, 14 says that in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. One of the most important passages of Scripture that speaks teaches about the deity of Jesus centers on the "Word." I would say that according to this scripture, words do matter.

Postmodern culture is attempting to mold God's created reality into a reality they approve of (for example: "I know I am in a boy's body - God's created reality -, but I am not a boy...I am something else underneath it - a reality the person agrees with."). Words need to be stripped of their meaning to accommodate society's newspeak and perversion.

God commands us to love our neighbor and teaches us how to do it. We are to do no physical or spiritual harm to them, yet the postmodernist has redefined love to mean something more shallow. **Love**, to them, means saying or doing nothing that would make your neighbor uncomfortable. In other words, you should be tolerant of their lifestyle and decisions in life. Did you notice the two words that have been hijacked? **Love** and **tolerance**?



One postmodernist quoted **Psalm 10:18**, "Protect the orphans and those who have been hurt. Don't let powerful people drive us from our land!" (ERV) He used the Psalm to say that God expected Christians to defend the rights of the transexuals, non-binary, LGTBQ, NAMBLA, etc., and every demographic of gender-queer people who are or feel oppressed. His point was that every Christian who did not defend people in this category was guilty of **hate** (another hijacked word).

However, the Psalm is not teaching what this person claims; it is, in fact, teaching from verse 17 that God hears the humble - the person willing to do God's will and not arrogantly live by his own will.

3. How Linguistic Theft Works²

- **Stops a Discussion in Its Tracks³:**
 - Certain words stop a conversation by appealing to a person's sense of right and wrong. Who would argue that **abuse** is wrong? Or that **love** is right? Everyone knows **tolerance** is right and **intolerance** is wrong.
 - How can we talk about anything if every comment we make is considered **intolerant, hateful, or abusive**?
 - For example, when I say that lying is a sin or that stealing is immoral, some will be quick to point out that I am being **intolerant** and **hateful** towards people who have the compulsion to lie or suffer from kleptomania. Not only are we dealing with different definitions, but we are also dealing with two realities or truths (dare I say, morals).

² Ferrer

³ See the addendum: Stanford's Suggested Elimination of Harmful Language Initiative

- The problem we face is that fake definitions obscure the issues, and it doesn't make sense to have a discussion when we are dealing with two different meanings of the same word.
- **Compels People to Act Without Thinking Through the Issues:**
 - The kid in class who always raises his hand to answer a question but never hears the question and, when called on, sits there with a blank look? - that is what emotions are like. Emotions are great responders but horrible leaders.
 - Most people react emotionally to a statement or an event before they react rationally. This gets a lot of us in trouble. The amygdala is the part of the brain responsible for emotional reactions - it reacts fast, faster than common sense! Someone said bad news sells because the amygdala is always looking for something to fear." My wife explains it better, "Chocolate is the answer; who cares what the question is."
 - This is the reason why most news headlines are inflammatory. The headlines catch our eyes, and we run with the headline, Tweet it out and start a wildfire!
 - Hitler said, "What luck for rulers that men do not think."
- **Blurs the Details:**
 - Ever wonder what went wrong? When I was in school, we had parades, a school day off, businesses were closed, mail delivery was suspended for one day, mattresses were half off, and on August 3rd, 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue on the Nina, Pinta, and Santa María. Then, all of a sudden, parades are called off, schools are renamed, the sharks are racists, Columbus' statues are being torn down, Columbus holidays are being canceled, and the ocean is no longer blue - but the mattresses are still half off!
 - It turns out someone **WOKE** up and decided Columbus, the Spaniards, and the Italians had a racist agenda, and everyone who celebrates anything Columbus related is participating with racism. Joseph Gone, a professor at Harvard, wrote, "One consequence has been a radical rethinking of who we choose to publicly commemorate through statues, monuments, and celebrations. In this light, public observance of Columbus Day must end." (Mineo)
 - If you are left scratching your head and wondering what went wrong, here is what happened (and it happened so subtly that you did not even notice it). Mix in guilt, fear, anger, pity, ignorance, confusion, and compassion; you have the recipe for pushing an agenda. It is called propaganda - biased or misleading information used to promote a particular political or point of view.
- **Vilifies the Opposing Viewpoint**
 - Have you ever stopped and analyzed the words "**pro-life**" and "**pro-choice**?"

- The term pro-life assumes people are for life, not against it. People in this category should be concerned about promoting the life of all people in any and all situations, according to the two simple words “pro” and “life.” Notice how these words are used to make people who believe in abortion (not taking into consideration the stages of development or reasons for the abortion at this point of the study) sound like they are “baby murderers,” “baby killers,” and “outright murderers?”
- Conversely, the term “pro-choice” assumes that people are for freedom to choose. Choose what? The words, as simple as they are, mean in favor of choosing whatever they want. However, in the abortion debate, a woman has the right to choose what she wants to do with her body. Anyone “anti-choice” is vilified as being against women’s rights to choose what to do with their body as she pleases.
- In this case, both terms vilify opposing viewpoints and do not allow honest discussion of the real issue of abortion.
- How about “**Love is love?**”
 - Who can argue with that? Just let people love each other and quit judging. Anyone who gets in the way of love must be a **hater**.
 - However, what is meant by the phrase of “love is love?” Maybe a better question is, who or what kind of love is included in that statement?
 - Every immoral and lustful type of sin that is mentioned in Romans 1 is included in the phrase “Love is love!”
 - Any person on either side of the issue, pro or con, will be vilified simply because of how words have been hijacked and redefined.
- Word of caution: Christians are just as guilty of vilifying the opposing side as the world is. We often judge like the Pharisees without getting to know the individual first. Stay focused on the attitude commanded in 1 Peter 3:15.



4. Hijacked Words

- **Love**

- I’m not old enough to know first-hand when love quit meaning “love” and took on what it means today. But I do know old dictionaries defined love as desiring the good of another.” (ManSoft Technology) This is similar to what Jesus said about loving your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:30-31)— He gave us a measuring stick on how we should love.
- Today love means blindly accepting whatever that person believes, even if that belief contradicts reality. After all, as some believe, we are all





entitled to our own truth and reality. This means that if a six-year-old believes she is a boy in a girl's body, her parents should love her enough to use multiple pronouns and go along with her gender fluidity because contradicting her is not love but hatred.

- Since God is love, God gets to define LOVE. 1 Corinthians 13:6; “[love] does not rejoice in **unrighteousness**, but rejoices with the **truth**;”
- Now we have a new problem, what is “**truth**?”

- **Truth⁴**

- In fifth grade, Mrs. Nall paddled me for not telling **THE truth** about my math homework. As far as she was concerned, there was only THE truth regarding completing or not completing the math homework – excuses, circumstances, or dogs did not matter when it came to the truth about the math homework.
- Since my fifth grade paddling, the pronoun “THE” has changed to the possessive pronouns: **MY** truth, **THEIR** truth, **OUR** truth, **HIS** truth, etc.
- This means EVERYONE has their **OWN** truth. Society has messed with a simple definition and upended a solid foundation of reality. If you question another person's truth, you better be prepared to eventually be accused of being a **bigot, racist, unloving, and/or intolerant**.

- **Tolerance**

- This word has been hijacked big time! To better understand this word, look it up in the dictionary and read Romans 14.
 - According to the dictionary, for tolerance to exist, there must be two things: dislike and disagreement.
 - Romans 14 gives us instructions on how to get along in the church regarding convictions in areas of **STRONGLY** held opinions of eating meats that had been sacrificed to idols and other disputable matters.
 - **Therefore, tolerance means to get along and live in peace despite disagreement.**
 - **TOLERANCE** has been hijacked to “accept others’ beliefs as equally true.” There is a difference. You and I can disagree on several things and live peacefully. However, I do not need to accept your belief as being true to be tolerant.
 - As soon as a person takes a stand on a strong conviction, that person is labeled as intolerant, hateful, bigoted, etc. It seems like the only stance we are allowed to have is that of neutrality, that is, no opinion. Don’t be bullied into silence!

⁴ Amazing how philosophers grapple with “truth” as a subject. If they would turn to the author of THE truth and accept that truth is OBJECTIVE, the problems would be resolved. Notice how Glanzberg admits that he cannot define truth in a coherent way. “Truth is one of the central subjects in philosophy. It is also one of the largest. Truth has been a topic of discussion in its own right for thousands of years. Moreover, a huge variety of issues in philosophy relate to truth, either by relying on theses about truth, or implying theses about truth. It would be impossible to survey all there is to say about truth in any coherent way.” (Glanzberg)

- We can coexist in this society with people of differing beliefs and opinions without selling out and changing our own beliefs or morals. Just remember the true definition of **tolerance**.

- **Justice and Equality**⁵

- The God of the Bible is all about justice and equality.
 - Justice - just behavior or treatment (Merriam-Webster)
 - Justice means fairness in the way people are dealt with.
 - God is justice and will deal with His creation with all fairness. This means that His creation will be judged according to His Word, in all fairness. This is in direct relation to how I behave. (John 12:48)⁶
 - Equality - equal, especially in status, rights, and opportunities (Merriam-Webster)
 - Acts 10:28-35; Galatians 3:28 teach that all people are equal in the eyes of God insofar as worth is concerned.
- In our modern culture, **Justice** and **Equality** mean that everyone gets a trophy, and sometimes those who work hard get punished.
 - For many years a particular school awarded honor roll certificates to students who maintained an A+ average throughout the year. As time progressed, parents complained that the "system" was not fair because not all students had the same opportunities to "GET" A's in school. The school revised its honor roll program to include A's-B's. Again, some parents complained that their children were not afforded the same opportunities to "GET" A's-B's. The program was revised. It would no longer be called the Honor Roll, and all students would get an award regardless of their level of achievement. This way, the awards system would be just and equal. What actually happened was that the Honor Roll program was dumbed down, the incentive was taken away from the ones who wanted to achieve the honor, and everyone lost. It was now a participation award instead of an achievement award.
 - **Justice** and **Equality** now mean giving me what I want, not because I deserve it but because I feel it is my right. If my neighbor has a lovely house, I deserve one, regardless of whether I work hard for it.



- **Bigot**

- How many ways are there to heaven? Is Jesus the only way? (John 14:6)
- Do you believe that marriage should be between one man and one woman

⁵ For an interesting read follow the link: <https://bit.ly/3YHEWB4>

⁶ "The unbeliever is judged by the words of salvation. The very words that man rejects will stand as a witness against him. The unbeliever rejected the words of salvation, so they will be his judge. Note that the unbeliever condemns himself, for the words of salvation have now been brought to earth by Jesus Christ. The full message of salvation is now available. No one is keeping man away from the words; no man is hiding the words from him. All man has to do is accept them and carry them to other men. If man rejects the words of salvation, he condemns and judges himself." (Leadership Ministries Worldwide)

for life? (Matthew 19:3-12)



- Do you believe that homosexuality is a sin? (1 Corinthians 6:9-20)
- Do you believe that the Word of God condemns drunkards? (1 Corinthians 6:9-20)
- Do you believe that tax evaders are wrong and need to repent? (1 Corinthians 6:9-20)
- Do you believe that liars will go to hell? (1 Corinthians 6:9-20)
- Do you believe that adulterers will be judged as unrighteous by God? (1 Corinthians 6:9-20)
- If you answered ONE WAY to the first question and then answered in the affirmative to any or all of the other questions, then the **PROGRESSIVE** and **WOKE**, society says you are a **bigot!** Nowadays, anyone who makes what is perceived as an exclusive statement is labeled a bigot. (Ferrer)
- "The irony is that people who use the term bigot in this manner are actually living out the very definition of the word. According to the Merriam-Webster's dictionary, a bigot is "a person who is obstinately or intolerantly devoted to his or her own opinions and prejudices." Popular opinion right now is that all ideas are equally legitimate, and anyone who does not agree is a bigot." (Ibid)

5. How to Fight Back Without Being a Jerk

- **Know the biblical definitions of these words—** Make sure you know what God has to say about the words people use. Keep your ears open and listen.
- **Teach your kids (first, teach yourself!) to identify buzzwords—**
 - I have come to LOATHE HGTV! There is ONE reason and only ONE reason why I LOATHE HGTV. Did I tell you I LOATHE HGTV? Here is the reason: Homeowners are never content. HGTV parades people with 1/4 million homes buying 1/2 million homes and, on top of that, remodeling the home! HGTV calls it the "dream home" or the "forever home." But here is where HGTV turned me off forever: It was in a series of episodes where the couple said they "**deserved**" a 2.5 million home. They went through their life story of hardships, fostering children, etc., and now they **deserved**... The only thing we **deserve** is what Paul says in Romans 6:23.
 - We live in a time where everyone "**deserves**" something. This leads to depression and a lack of contentment.
 - Read what Paul said to Timothy (I am using my five-year-old child's ICB version); "It is true that serving God makes a person very rich, if he is **satisfied** with what he has. 7 When we came into the world, we brought



nothing. And when we die, we can take nothing out. 8 So, if we have food and clothes, we will be satisfied with that. 9 Those who want to become rich bring temptation to themselves. They are caught in a trap. They begin to want many foolish things that will hurt them, things that ruin and destroy people.”

- Even adults can easily become victims and promoters of newspeak.

- **Decide to be salt and light**— Matthew 5:13-14



- Light exposes and salt preserves; light shines the light on evil, and salt irritates. The point is, as Christians, we need to love as God has loved us. We need to be peacemakers, as Jesus was a peacemaker. Sometimes, being the salt, light, and peacemaker will upset some folks - but we still need to fulfill our duty.

Language: Word Hijacking Questions

1. Read the scriptures and see what they say about the keywords listed below. You may need to read the context surrounding these verses. Feel free to use a concordance or Bible study application to help you. They describe what the word hijackers typically mean when they use these words.

Biblical Understanding of Key Word	Secular Understanding of Key Word by Linguistic Thieves
Love (see 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Philippians 1:9-11)	Love
Truth (see Psalm 119:160; John 8:31-32; John 17:17)	Truth
Tolerance (see Proverbs 17:15; Romans 12:18; Romans 14:1-4)	Tolerance
Justice (see Deuteronomy 27:19; Isaiah 1:17)	Justice
Equality (see Genesis 1:27; Romans 2:11; Galatians 3:28; James 2:8-9)	Equality
Bigot (see 1 Samuel 16:7; Acts 10:28; John 7:24; 1 John 2:11)	Bigot

Biblical Understanding of Key Word	Secular Understanding of Key Word by Linguistic Thieves
Authentic (see John 3:19-21; James 2:18; 1 John 1:8-10; 1 John 3:18)	Authentic

2. How do these scriptures relate to this lesson? Be as specific as possible.

Key Scriptures	How do these scriptures relate to this lesson?
Colossians 2:8	
2 Peter 2:1-3	
Genesis 11:1-7	
Zephaniah 3:9	

Lesson 4: Self-help Gospel: Humanism

Faith and belief lead to success, happiness, and power...but faith and belief in YOURSELF is humanism.



"16 For I am not ashamed of the **gospel**, for **it** is the **power of God** for **salvation to everyone** who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek...**21** For **even though they knew** God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. **22** Professing to be wise, they became fools, **23** and **exchanged** the glory of the incorruptible God **for an image** in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures." (**Romans 1:16, 22-23**)

1. What are we talking about?

- The apostle Paul spoke volumes about the human mind and condition when he penned the first chapter to the Roman church. He claimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ is what has the power to change man's lost condition as long as he is willing to obey God. Notice that Paul claims that man cannot save himself; he cannot go from a lost condition to a saved one on his own. In the next few verses, he explains how mankind refused God's infinite wisdom and exchanged it for his own finite and imperfect wisdom. The imperfection in man's wisdom is seen in the path mankind took to save himself or to self-help - left the eternal, incorruptible God and worshipped man, reptiles, birds, and crawling creatures.
 - The fallacy in all this is that man "thought" (and thinks) that he could help himself by looking at the material things in life and the world (human thought, animals, earth, wind, water, fire, etc.).
 - This is called **humanism**. The idea is that humans do not need the divine to help us in our plight. Man can help himself in all things relating to and pertaining to life on this earth without divine intervention or the help of the supernatural.
- **"Humanism is defined as, 'A philosophy that rejects supernaturalism (belief in God), regards man as a natural object and asserts the essential dignity and worth of man and his capacity to achieve self-realization through the use of reason and scientific method—also called naturalistic humanism, scientific humanism. A religion subscribing to these beliefs; religious humanism.'"**
(Needham)



2. Self-help

- There are few brick-and-mortar bookstores, but some can still be found. One of the largest sections in these stores is the self-help area. It's like a do-it-yourself section for fixing yourself. If you want to get along with your co-workers, you may want to read *Dealing with People You Can't Stand: How to Bring Out the Best in People at Their Worst*. Are you tired of feeling sad all the time? Maybe it's time

to read, *Heal Your Mind Heal Your Life: A Self-Help Book For Depression and Anxiety*. Is it time for you to get your financial mess in order? Amazon recommends you help yourself by reading *Money Mayday: 7 Steps to Cleaning Up Your Money Mess*. Maybe you heard Oprah Winfrey say it was time to edit your life story as she held up the book *Maybe You Should Talk to Someone: The Workbook: A Toolkit for Editing Your Story and Changing Your Life*. Are you a hot mess at being an adult? There is a self-help book for that too, *How to Adult: And Get Control of Your Life - Actionable steps you can use today to stop being a hot mess combined with motivation & self-love reminders*. Have you lost the key to unlocking your greatness? Whatever that means, but hey, there is a book for that too, and it says it all in the catchy title, *Good Vibes, Good Life: How Self-Love Is the Key to Unlocking Your Greatness*. And there are two more that made the top most recommended self-help books for 2022 in the Amazon book store: *You Owe You: Ignite Your Power, Your Purpose, and Your Why*, and then Matthew Perry's book (no joke!) *Friends, Lovers, and the Big Terrible Thing: A Memoir*.

- I went long on the self-help list on purpose. It was to illustrate that a self-help guru is ready to sell us a book as long as we are gullible and willing to buy it. *We have been sold a bill of bogus goods to believe that if there is something wrong with us, all we have to do is read a book and help ourselves. Their answer to every problem in our lives is found within ourselves - apart from God.*
 - **Not entirely false** - as with every lie the devil tells, he must sprinkle some truth to sell it. God has never expected His children to sit back and expect change to happen on its own. If we suffer from an addiction, God expects us to do our part to change - effort and work are required. Just like the salvation of our souls, Paul wrote in Romans 1:16 that the Gospel will save all who believe. Notice that the power to save is in the Gospel, but it can and will save only those who put forth the effort to believe (believe means to obey⁷).
 - **Not entirely true** - What happens when we believe that the answer to our problems is completely within ourselves, separate from God? We become gods worshipping ourselves or other things. The glory is not to the One True God but to something else. In this case, the glory is to self or, as Paul put it, to animals and creeping things. (**Romans 1:21-23**). In all actuality, when we look at self to help self, we become fools in our futile



⁷ **what does it mean to believe in Jesus?** More specifically, when we read in the Bible about "believing" and when we sing about "believing," is it merely talking about a heartfelt, mental assent to the truthfulness of who Jesus is and what He did for us on the cross? Or, is it something else? Maybe even something more? The Bible teaches, plainly and repeatedly, that truly "believing" as God expects and requires (and as that word is often used in the New Testament) is equivalent to obeying. Someone might read that statement and immediately object, "Believing is not the same as obeying. There are many people, in the Bible and today, who believe but do not obey." That statement is true. But, we are talking about those who truly and acceptably believe, as God uses that word. Scripture often uses the words "believe" and "obey" interchangeably, emphasizing God's view of faith as an obedient faith. Highlight **John 3:36** in your Bible. "He who **believes** in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not **obey** the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (NASB). Note carefully that "eternal life" is for one who "believes" but "not" for one who does not "obey." The words, in God's dictionary, mean the same thing. In your margin next to **John 3:36**, write **Hebrews 3:18-19**. "And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were **disobedient**? So we see that they were not able to enter because of **unbelief**." Again, the words are synonymous. In the margin next to **John 3:16**, you might write these two references above, and add **Hebrews 5:9**. **John 3:16** says, "Whoever **believes**...should...have **everlasting life**." **Hebrews 5:9** teaches, "He became the author of **eternal salvation** to all who **obey** Him." Eternal salvation is for those who have an obedient faith. Believing, as God defines it, includes obeying.

(useless) minds.

3. Is Self-Help any good?

- No one should discount self-help completely.
 - As a matter of fact, the Bible instructs us to **bring captive every evil thought**. “We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (**2 Corinthians 10:5**)
 - **Doing the right thing. James 4:17**
 - **Working heartily. Colossians 3:23-24**
 - **Worshipping with the saints regularly. Hebrews 10:24-26**
 - **Study God’s Word. 2 Timothy 2:15**
 - **Strive for peace with everyone. Hebrews 12:14**
 - **God has given us a spirit of love and self-control. 2 Timothy 1:7**
- God expects us to help ourselves, but notice from the Scriptures that since we have been created in His image, He has given us the ability to help ourselves.



4. Does Self-Help delude Christians?

- One would think that as many Biblical warnings against greed and wealth, Christians would not be **enamored with the prosperity Gospel**. Too many religious people are staunch followers of Joel Osteen, a TV evangelist of the largest church in the United States, Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas. His sermons and books' main message is hope, healing, and forgiveness. (Lakewood Church). Joel is part of a group of prosperity gospel pastors that peddle self-help lies. (Schmidt) Too many Christians follow these pastors on social media, post their “inspirational” quotes, buy their books, watch television programs, and contribute to THEIR ministries.
 - Preachers are commanded to preach in and out of season, to correct, rebuke, exhort, and encourage. (**2 Timothy 4:2-3**). The preaching is to encourage the flock to live upright, righteous lives and not strive for the riches of this world. (**Matthew 6:20-21; 1 Timothy 6:10**)
 - The prosperity gospel pastors are more life coaches than preachers of the Gospel of Christ.
 - One of the famous lines (lies) is: “name-it-claim it.” The official name is “Word of Faith,” theology promoted by Pentecostalism because of its faith-healing teachings. The prosperity preachers teach, “*We have to conceive it on the inside before we’re ever going to receive it on the outside. If you don’t think you can have something good, then you never will. The barrier is in your mind. . . . Your own wrong thinking can keep you from God’s best. . . . To experience [God’s] immeasurable favor, you must rid yourself of that small-minded thinking and start expecting God’s blessings, start anticipating promotion and supernatural*



increase. You must conceive it in your heart before you can receive it. In other words, you must make increase in your own thinking, then God will bring those things to pass.” (Osteen)

5. The Deeper Calling: Peeling back the layers



- The problem with the self-help gospel is that it focuses on our OWN individual needs without recognizing that Christ calls us to follow Him, not mammon. (**Matthew 10:38; 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23; 14:27**)
- Using Jesus as our example (Philippians 2:5-11), one can see that it is a long trip from the self-help gospel when He said we save our lives by losing them (**Matthew 16:25; Mark 9:35; Luke 9:24**).
- Paul called on Christians to give up their interests for the welfare of their brethren (**Philippians 2:4-11**), and to carry one another’s burdens (Galatians 6:2; **Romans 15:1**), and he considered all of his achievements and possessions as dung in comparison to encountering Christ and sharing in the sufferings of his Lord (**Philippians 3:7-11**)
- “The problem with the self-help gospel is that it expects nothing from us. In the end, it leaves us unfulfilled. And it stands far removed from what it means to live in Christ.” (Carey)
- The self-help gospel goes to fanatical extremes that should leave people baffled. However, amazingly, hundreds in an auditorium and thousands at home “amen’d” and applauded as Pastor Jesse Duplantis said, “I’m going to say something that’s going to knock your lights off [sic]. God has the power to take life, but He can’t. He’s got the power to do it, but He won’t. He’s bound; He can’t! He says, ‘Death and life is in the power of whose tongue?’ Yours... You choose when you live, you choose when you die. Death and life is in he power of your tongue, not God’s.” (Word of Faith Channel)

6. Self-help gospel makes us out to be our own gods

- This is dangerous and counterfeit.
- “I deserve...” is dangerous when I believe I deserve prosperity and happiness on this earth. I am encouraged to do my part and pray without ceasing, but what I deserve is something totally different, and it is only by the grace and mercy of God that I receive His bountiful blessings, not because I said it and claimed, or because the power is in my tongue! (Romans 5:6-8)
- Hillary Ferrer says, “What we will discover, however, is that when we scatter a few seeds of self-helpism, along with a few seeds of moral relativism, we won’t get happiness. Instead, we will end up with a lush growth of self-centeredness blooming in our hearts.” (Ferrer)

7. Adam, Eve, Babel, et, al., tried the self-help gospel and failed



- Adam and Eve were happy in the Garden of Eden. God provided everything they ever wanted and needed. The devil preached a different gospel and convinced them they could become their own gods - or like God. (**Genesis 3**). A terrible mistake affected them, and to this day, we all suffer. (**Romans 8:22**)
- A bunch of "Nimrods" on the plains of Shinar (**Genesis 10-11**) decided to make a name for themselves by building an engineering marvel that, according to their plans, would reach heaven. God said that the people would be encouraged to do "this thing" and would believe that nothing would be impossible for them. (**Genesis 11:6**)
- Nebuchadnezzar was warned not to take credit for his successes in life but to give God the honor. Nebuchadnezzar believed he was responsible for all of his success, that his tongue and might got him all he had and that God (if there was One greater than him) had nothing to do with his success. He was the personification of the self-help gospel. (**Daniel 4:1-37**)

8. The Remedy

- When we believe in the "say-it-claim-it" theology, we minimize man's greatest problem - SIN. We are not citizens of this world. Whether believers or unbelievers, our citizenship is not in this world. Eventually, this world will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:7; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-9); some will be judged eternal hell and others eternal heaven. The choice is ours; it depends on whether we believe Gospel or not, whether we obey Gospel or not.



- Hell is prepared for those who are disobedient to God's will:
 - **Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:3-5; Revelation 21:8**
- Heaven is prepared for this who are obedient to God's will:
 - **John 14:1-4**; "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. **2** In My Father's house are many rooms; if *that* were not so, I would have told you, because I am going *there* to prepare a place for you. **3** And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will take you to Myself, so that where I am, *there* you also will be."
 - **John 3:36**; "The one who believes in the Son has eternal life; but the one who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him."



- **John 3:16**; “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever **believes**⁸ in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”
- **Mark 16:16**; “He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.”
- **Acts 2:38**; “Peter *said* to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
- **Matthew 7:21**; “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*.”
- **Acts 22:16**; “Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.”⁹
- God does not help those who help themselves but helps those who accept and recognize they cannot help themselves in terms of salvation.
 - **Romans 5:6-9**; “For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous person; though perhaps for the good person someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.”
 - **Ephesians 2:8**; “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is the gift of God;*”

^{8 8} **what does it mean to believe in Jesus?** More specifically, when we read in the Bible about “believing” and when we sing about “believing,” is it merely talking about a heartfelt, mental assent to the truthfulness of who Jesus is and what He did for us on the cross? Or, is it something else? Maybe even something more? The Bible teaches, plainly and repeatedly, that truly “believing” as God expects and requires (and as that word is often used in the New Testament) is equivalent to obeying. Someone might read that statement and immediately object, “Believing is not the same as obeying. There are many people, in the Bible and today, who believe but do not obey.” That statement is true. But, we are talking about those who truly and acceptably believe, as God uses that word. Scripture often uses the words “believe” and “obey” interchangeably, emphasizing God’s view of faith as an obedient faith. Highlight **John 3:36** in your Bible. “He who **believes** in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not **obey** the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (NASB). Note carefully that “eternal life” is for one who “believes” but “not” for one who does not “obey.” The words, in God’s dictionary, mean the same thing. In your margin next to **John 3:36**, write **Hebrews 3:18-19**. “And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were **disobedient**? So we see that they were not able to enter because of **unbelief**.” Again, the words are synonymous. In the margin next to **John 3:16**, you might write these two references above, and add **Hebrews 5:9**. **John 3:16** says, “Whoever **believes**...should...have **everlasting life**.” **Hebrews 5:9** teaches, “He became the author of **eternal salvation** to all who **obey** Him.” Eternal salvation is for those who have an obedient faith. Believing, as God defines it, includes obeying.

⁹ <https://bit.ly/3i8mi4M>

Self-help Gospel: Humanism - Questions

HUMANISM

DEFINITIONS

Humanism: The idea is that humans do not need the divine to help us in our plight. Man can help himself in all things relating to and pertaining to life on this earth without divine intervention or the help of the supernatural.

Word	Definition
Self-awareness	
Brokenness	
Idolatry	
Deism	

1. Read **2 Corinthians 11:23-29**. Paul dedicated his entire life to serving the Lord and others. Self-helpism is about living your best life now. How do you think Paul would have responded to this approach to living? Be as detailed as possible.

2. **Ephesians 1:3**; "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us **with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.**" According to Paul, all the blessings that have been promised to us are spiritual in nature and in the heavenly places. This does not sound like the promises of self-helpism of living your best life now, say it, claim it, and get it theology. What are the spiritual blessings we have been promised? (See **Ephesians 1:5-9; Galatians 5:22-23**)

3. **OPINION**: Do you think humanism is dangerous to our youth? Why or why not? Please defend your answer. (**1 Peter 3:15**)

4. Where are we to live our best lives? How does this influence how we live now? (Consider these verses: **Matthew 22:36-40; Matthew 6:19-24**)

5. Read these scriptures and in a sentence or two, explain them in light of our study:

- **Psalm 121:2**

- **Ezekiel 36:26**

- **Colossians 3:5-10**

- **James 1:22**

Lesson 5: Naturalism: "Faith is believing what you know ain't so." - Yeah, right!

What and Who is a Naturalism and one who ascribes to...?

This is so ironic even to have to write this - but naturalism is a religion! It's ironic because the core of naturalism denies the core of Christianity, or better yet, that God created everything out of nothing. Think about it, naturalists laugh at the notion that there is a God and that religion is false, but in the truest definition of religion, naturalism is a religion.

Let's deal with **who** are some naturalists. There is a long list of famous naturalists: the Irwin family - the Crocodile clan -, Charles Darwin, Stephen Hawking, Henry David Thoreau - the American essayist and poet who is credited to have influenced people like Martin Luther King, Jr., and then there is Mahatma Gandhi, Huang Zongxi from the 16th century, among thousands of others. All these people have several things in common: they were/are extremely intelligent in the culture (Romans 1:21-25), they are very influential among the worldly, and their views and teachings have impacted many Christians. The last is what makes this "religion" dangerous. Naturalism is taught at every age, as young as toddler age, from Sesame Street, books, and public classrooms to television series and dramas.

What is naturalism? Naturalism is known as atheism, scientific materialism, and secular humanism - different titles, same religion. These people would loudly object that their view is a religion. They would say that they are the antithesis of religion. Religion is defined as: *"the belief in and worship of a superhuman power or powers, especially a God or gods."* (Merriam-Webster) Well, atheists, secular humanists, and those who ascribe to naturalism do not fit this definition. However, the following definition says, *"a particular system of faith and worship; a pursuit or interest to which someone ascribes supreme importance."* (Ibid) This definition indeed fits the followers of naturalism. We will see this later.



Let's define **what** naturalism is. It is very simple, really. One word - NATURE - Naturalism is the philosophy that there is nothing spiritual - no God, no spirit, no soul, no angels etc. If you can't see, feel, smell, taste, hear, measure, weigh, etc., then it does not exist - nor has it ever existed. In other words, it does not take "Christian" faith to believe in naturalism because everything in naturalism can be seen, felt, heard, in nature, etc., but not so with religion. You cannot measure God in a test tube or the temperature of our soul with mercury. Therefore, those things which cannot be seen, felt, etc., must not exist.



Dr. Mortenson defines it this way, *“So what are the beliefs of naturalism? The most fundamental belief from which all others flow is that nature or matter is all that exists. It has always existed or (sic) it came into existence from nothing. There is nothing outside or before nature, i.e., the material universe that (sic) is studied by modern science. There is no God and no supernatural. Although nature has not always existed in its present form, what we see today is the result of time and chance and the laws of nature working on matter. Miracles are not possible, because they would be a violation of the laws of nature. Non-material things such as hopes, plans, behaviors, languages, logical inferences, etc., exist, but they are the result of and determined by material causes”* (Mortenson)

How did naturalism become a dominant religion? This is an important question to answer. A simple Google search will render Darwin as a main believer and enthusiast of naturalism, but he did not “invent” the theory. It dates back to the Enlightenment movement in Europe in the late 17th and 18th centuries. (Ibid) The “Enlightened” attempted to replace the Bible as the ultimate source of authority for determining truth and understanding ultimate reality. During the same centuries, both deism¹⁰ and atheism became popular.

Deism is halfway on the road to atheism. Deism believes that God created the universe, stepped back, and allowed everything to take its natural course without divine intervention or providence. This would have meant a denial of God cursing creation (Genesis 3:14-19; Romans 8:19-23), at the flood (Genesis 8:21), and other miracles like the parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:19-31), and even the resurrection of Jesus.

Explanations of authority throughout human history have been cyclical. In the **premodern** era (beginning of man to the mid-17th century), people relied on two sources for knowledge and truth: (1) God or gods, observation, common sense, and authority; (2) Ultimate truth - God.

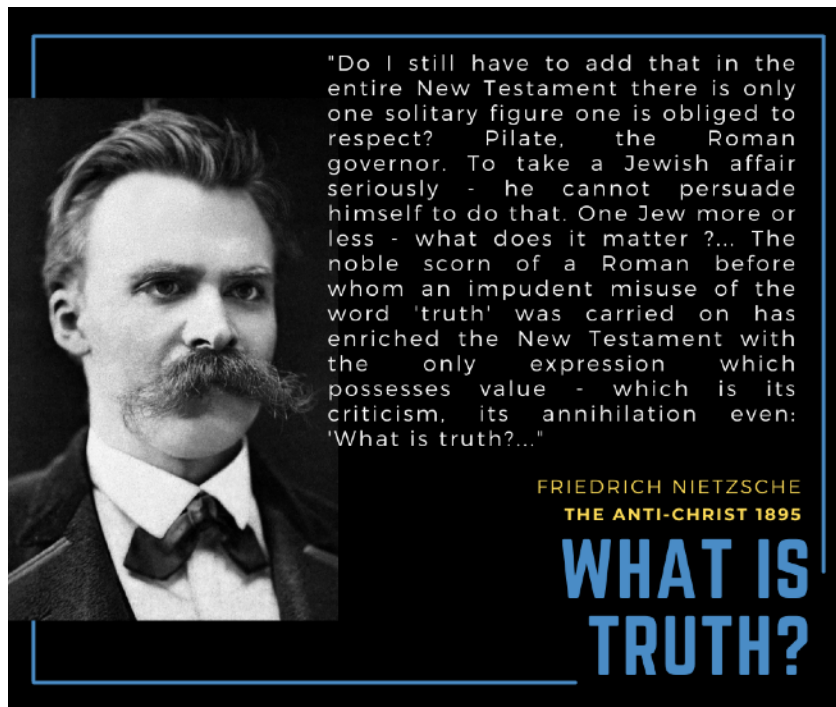
Then in the **modern** era (1500 - 1800ish), people transitioned to believing that life’s ultimate questions could be answered by human reasoning (observation, experimentation, and human wisdom) without God to guide them. One can only imagine the disastrous effects this would have on families and society.

The **post-modern** era began to take hold in the early 1940s and stretches to now. In the post-modern era, philosophers, professors, scientists, and the general populace has progressed with human wisdom as the source of knowledge, and ultimate truth is found not in God but in the created things - nature.

¹⁰ belief in the existence of a supreme being, specifically of a creator who does not intervene in the universe. The term is used chiefly of an intellectual movement of the 17th and 18th centuries that accepted the existence of a creator on the basis of reason but rejected belief in a supernatural deity who interacts with humankind.

New Testament: The apostle Paul lived in the pre-modern era, yet he understood this philosophy of naturalism to be foolish. (Romans 1:18-32) Pilate asked Jesus with an exasperated gasp, "What is truth?" (John 18:38) It has been debated what Pilate meant, whether he was concerned about absolute truth or jesting.

Note what Friedrich Nietzsche wrote in his classic book, *The Anti-Christ*, where he attacks Christianity as a blight on humanity:



Naturalism 1.1

Humans are **idol-creating** machines. It is unknown when the first idol was created; however, in the Bible, God commanded His children not to have any other gods. This means that idolatry, the worshipping of self or anything other than God, has always been an issue. (Exodus 20:3)

Practical Implications of Naturalism

Naturalism has practical implications that should be considered. These implications are based on the belief that everything in the world can be explained by natural causes and laws. This means that there is no supernatural or divine intervention. As a result, naturalism can impact how we view morality, ethics, and the purpose of life. It is essential to understand these implications when considering a naturalistic worldview.

Christians believe God is eternal, has always existed, and has no origin, and that He is omnipotent; therefore, He created the universe. (Genesis 1:1ff; Colossians 1:15-17) Naturalists would say, "Foolishness!" Here is where we need to pay attention because whatever hypothesis any scientist, naturalist, evolutionist, or whoever comes up with will ultimately conclude something else that is : (1) uncreated, (2) self-existent, and (3) capable of creating. This is why being a Naturalist requires faith just as much, if not more, as a Christian!

Where did the universe come from?

1. The material world has always existed.

Naturalists believe that the universe has either always existed or had a purely natural origin. (Carrier)¹¹ In other words, the universe is eternal, or it created itself. Talk about faith! The Bible says that "Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever." (Hebrews 13:8). Atheists dare make fun of the Bible. Ultimately, one is still left with the same "problem" Christians face - FAITH. After the pre-modern, post-

¹¹ Carrier, Richard. *Sense and Goodness without God*. AuthorHouse, 2005. The universe has either always existed or had a purely natural origin, being neither created nor designed. Either way, naturalists hold nature (rather than, say, God or Tao) to be the ground of all being. The popular Big Bang cosmology was developed within this assumption, proposing that the observable universe had a beginning, unfolding from a process of natural laws. But this does not resolve the question of whether all that exists began to exist at once or whether a being of some sort has always existed. Some naturalists propose a multiverse theory where it is thought that the observable universe is only part of a much larger whole. Citing the first law of thermodynamics, other naturalists propose that matter has always existed; matter, not the universe in its current state, exists eternally.

modern, and modern thinkers, the conclusion is still FAITH. Christians began with Genesis 1:1 and never let go of Genesis 1:1 because of FAITH.

2. There are an infinite number of universes.

When I first heard the term multiverse, I thought it was about multiple verses, but I was wrong. Multiverse refers to an infinite, or at the very least, two, universes (Ellis and Silk say multiverse proponents believe there are billions)¹². Talk about the Twilight Zone. Naturalists and others out there, dare I say, scientists, hypothesize: "...different universes within the multiverse are called 'parallel universes,' 'other universes,' 'alternate universes,' or 'many worlds.' One common assumption is that the multiverse is a 'patchwork quilt of separate universes all bound by the same laws of physics.'"¹³ (Swain)

The idea is that there are millions of other universes that either have always existed or created themselves. Still, our universe won the lottery to contain all the scientific constants needed to sustain and create life naturally (without special help or intervention).

Some physicists say the multiverse is not a legitimate topic of scientific inquiry and even have debated if it delegitimizes actual science. (Kragh) Ellis and Silk admit that this Multiverse theory cannot be observed, tested, and much less proven. (Ellis and Silk)

Consider this: "Billions of universes – and of galaxies and copies of each of us – accumulate with no possibility of communication between them or of testing their reality. But if a duplicate self exists in every multiverse domain and there are infinitely many, which is the real 'me' that I experience now? Is any version of oneself preferred over any other? How could 'I' ever know what the 'true' nature of reality is if one self favours the multiverse and another does not?" (Ibid)

In other words, if billions of universes are exact copies of ours, then that means there are billions of exact copies of "us" in those universes. So, how can we ever know the true self and the true reality? It takes much more faith to believe this scenario from the comics than it does Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning, God...."

¹² The multiverse is motivated by a puzzle: why fundamental constants of nature, such as the fine-structure constant that characterizes the strength of electromagnetic interactions between particles and the cosmological constant associated with the acceleration of the expansion of the Universe, have values that lie in the small range that allows life to exist. Multiverse theory claims that there are billions of unobservable sister universes out there in which all possible values of these constants can occur. So somewhere there will be a bio-friendly universe like ours, however improbable that is. (Ellis and Silk)

¹³ The multiverse is a hypothetical group of multiple universes. Together, these universes are presumed to comprise everything that exists: the entirety of space, time, matter, energy, information, and the physical laws and constants that describe them. The different universes within the multiverse are called "parallel universes", "other universes", "alternate universes", or "many worlds". One common assumption is that the multiverse is a "patchwork quilt of separate universes all bound by the same laws of physics." [The Universe Next Door: A Journey through 55 Alternative Realities, Parallel Worlds and Possible Futures](#)

3. Natural laws are capable of creating.

Almost everyone is familiar with the name Stephen Hawking. He was an English theoretical physicist, cosmologist and author. He is famous for his theories on gravity and black holes. Hawking believed that "because the law of gravity exists, the universe can and will create itself from nothing."¹⁴ (Hawking and Mlodinow)

John Lennox, a famous mathematician and Christian debated Hawking on this gravity and the universe being created from nothing. The following is a transcript form an interview by John Burtwell in 2021 in reference to this debate:

Burtwell

The late Stephen Hawking once commented, Because there is such a law as gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing. And you famously responded in, I hope I quote you right on this job. That nonsense remains nonsense. Even when talked by World famous scientists. Please, could you explain the meaning and context behind this exchange?

Lennox

Well, the context is exactly what you quoted Stephen Hawking's statement and sheer nonsense. Because there is a law like gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing. Because there is a law, because there is something the universe will create itself from nothing. That is a flat contradiction. Anybody? Way of thinking. But that's only the start. The universe will create itself.

Lennox

What does that mean? You have how you say that X creates Y. I mean, roughly speaking, that if you've got X, you'll get y. If I say X creates X, well, that simply means that nonsense remains nonsense. Talking about that is utter nonsense. And many people have actually pointed that out, not only Christian thinkers like myself. It is sheer nonsense.

Lennox

And then there's another confusion in there, a third one, because there is a law like gravity. He doesn't say because gravity exists. He may mean that, of course, but I think the hand that their lies another massive confusion of thought that laws are creative, which are not. No. Newton's laws of motion never moved to billiard ball in the history of the universe.

Lennox

People were keys to that. The laws describe the motion and that's a problem. And Hawking said that elsewhere that he imagined and Paul DAVIES does the same, that there was a law that

¹⁴ "Because there is a law such as gravity, the Universe can and will create itself from nothing. Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something rather than nothing, why the Universe exists, why we exist. It is not necessary to invoke God to ... set the Universe going." (Hawking and Mlodinow)

created things. But laws are not creative, they're not causes. So here is philosophical idiocy, and that is why I say nonsense remains nonsense. Even a famous scientist talk.

Burtwell

Even if it doesn't, it doesn't stop it from being nonsense. Yeah. Do you know Stephen?

Lennox

Hawking kind of posited where the law of gravity would have existed prior to the creation of spacetime and matter too.

Lennox

You now know that the great problem for many of these physicists is that they are faced with the problem of the existence of a law like universe. Where does that come from? And they never really address that question as far as I can see. I just finished revising my book garden. Stephen Hawking In light of the fact that they died not long ago, and I reflected on that a bit more, but it seems to me that that remains a sticker, a real problem.

Lennox

The origin of the law, like nature of the universe that we can formulate in terms of mathematical equations. And so to me, that's the evidence of mind behind the universe.

Dr. Lennox destroys Hawking's foundation by arguing that **natural laws** do not generate things; they describe them. Like the billiard ball illustration, the law of gravity does not move the ball - it does not generate movement or **create** it, an outside agent must act upon it to move it.

Derived from the word apologia, meaning "defense"

TAKEAWAY

The conclusion of all naturalists is that the universe came from somewhere natural, but they don't what, when, how, why, and/or who. Sadly, human intelligence, wisdom, and reasoning have only made us foolish in our own understanding, or lack thereof. The best answer to what, when, how, why, and/or who is still is, "In the beginning (time), God created (by converting energy into) the heavens (space) and the earth (matter)." (Genesis 1:1-3). The first three verses of Genesis explicitly express all known perspectives of the creation. The creation account of the Holy Scripture agrees with the **observable evidence**, and God first tells man that He controls **all aspects of the universe**.

(apologia)..." (1 Peter 3:15)

That settles the universe question (?), what about life? Where did life come from?

The question of the origin of life should be easier to answer than the complex question of the origin of the universe - for the naturalist. After all, life is smaller than the enormous universe.

The University of California, Berkeley, has a website dedicated to helping the world "Understanding Evolution." One article titled "From Soup to Cells: The Origin of Life" attempts to explain "How did life originate?"

"Living things (even ancient organisms like bacteria) are **enormously complex**. However, all this complexity did not leap fully-formed from the primordial soup. Instead life **almost certainly** originated in a series of small steps, each building upon the complexity that evolved previously: Simple organic molecules, similar to the nucleotide shown below, are the building blocks of life and **must have been** involved in its origin. **Experiments suggest** that organic molecules **could have been** synthesized in the atmosphere of early Earth and rained down into the oceans. RNA and DNA molecules – the genetic material for all life – are just long chains of simple nucleotides." (University of California Berkeley)

"All living things reproduce, copying their genetic material and passing it on to their offspring. Thus, the ability to copy the molecules that encode genetic information is a key step in the origin of life – without it, life could not exist. This ability **probably** first evolved in the form of an RNA self-replicator – an RNA molecule that could copy itself." (Ibid)

Notice all the bold typed words. How much confidence do those words produce? "Almost certainly," "must have been," "could have been," is how evolutionists explain the origin of life! "

Scientists cannot explain with certainty the origin of life. They have theories, hypothesis and these change over time. For example, Charles Q. Choi¹⁵ discusses seven (7) theories on the origin of life! "Science remains undecided and conflicted as to the exact origin of life, also known as abiogenesis. Even the very definition of life is contested and rewritten, with one study published in the Journal of Biomolecular Structure and Dynamics, suggesting uncovering 123 different published definitions." (Choi and Duttfield)

¹⁵ Charles has a Master of Arts degree from the University of Missouri-Columbia, School of Journalism and a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of South Florida. Charles has visited every continent on Earth, **drinking rancid yak butter tea** in Lhasa, snorkeling with sea lions in the Galapagos and even climbing an iceberg in Antarctica.

1. THE LIGHTENING THEORY -“Lightning **may** have provided the spark needed for life to begin.” (Ibid)
2. THE CLAY THEORY - “The first molecules of life might have met on clay, according to an **idea** elaborated by organic chemist Alexander Graham Cairns-Smith at the University of Glasgow in Scotland.” (Ibid)
3. THE DEEP-SEA VENTS THEORY - “The deep-sea vent theory **suggests** that life **may** have begun at submarine hydrothermal vents spewing elements key to life, such as carbon and hydrogen-, according to the journal Nature Reviews Microbiology.” (Ibid)
4. THE CHILLY-START THEORY - “Ice **might** have covered the oceans 3 billion years ago and facilitated the birth of life.” (Ibid)
5. THE RNA AND DNA THEORY - “The answer **may** be RNA, which can store information like DNA, serve as an enzyme like proteins, and help create both DNA and proteins, according to the journal Molecular Biology of the Cell. Later DNA and proteins succeeded this “RNA world,” because they are more efficient.” (Ibid)
6. THE SIMPLE BEGINNING THEORY - “Instead of developing from complex molecules such as RNA, life **might** have begun with smaller molecules interacting with each other in cycles of reactions. These **might** have been contained in simple capsules akin to cell membranes, and over time more complex molecules that performed these reactions better than the smaller ones **could have** evolved, scenarios dubbed ‘metabolism-first’ models, as opposed to the ‘gene-first’ model of the ‘RNA world’ hypothesis.” (Ibid)
7. THE OUTER SPACE THEORY - “**Perhaps** life did not begin on Earth at all, but was brought here from elsewhere in space, a **notion** known as panspermia.” (Ibid)

Theories abound, and dubious explanations are as clear as the primordial soup some scientists say life came from. Once again, it takes much more faith to believe in the scientific theories than it does in what God’s Word says:

- “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1)
- “Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. ” (Genesis 1:3)
- “Then God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” (Genesis 1:6)
- “Then God said, “Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear”; and it was so. God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters He called seas” (Genesis 1:9-10)
- “ Then God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, *and* fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them”; and it was so.” (Genesis 1:11)

- “Then God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so. God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; *He made* the stars also. God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness” (Genesis 1:14-18)
- “Then God said, “Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens.” (Genesis 1:20”
- “ Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind”; and it was so.” (Genesis 1:24)
- “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ” (Genesis 1:26-27)

Discussion:

A common obstacle Christians encounter is not knowing how to answer questions from secularists challenging our faith. To them, we often say, “You just have to believe.” We may think this is an acceptable answer, but it is not. Secularists can provide us with much evidence based on scientific experiments resulting in theories. Remember, Paul had learned the language of the secular people in Athens, he had read their literature and understood their thinking and was able to reason with logic - their own KIND of logic - before even using Scripture. We need to learn to do the same.

This is why this chapter is heavy in science theories and terminology.

LESSON 4: NATURALISM: “FAITH IS BELIEVING WHAT YOU KNOW AIN’T SO.” - YEAH, RIGHT!

REFLECTION:	RESPONSE:
What is your understanding of naturalism?	
What is a self-refuting statement?	
What is materialism in the context of this study?	
Discuss faith with the class and write down the reactions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is faith needed in naturalism? Yes? What kind, how much, and why? No? Why not? • Is faith needed in creationism? Yes? What kind, how much, and why? No? Why not?
What is required to be persuaded ? Is persuasion the same as feelings?	
Does Hebrew 11:1 teach blind faith or evidence-conviction? Explain the answer.	

LESSON 4: NATURALISM: "FAITH IS BELIEVING WHAT YOU KNOW AIN'T SO." - YEAH, RIGHT!

REFLECTION:	DISCUSS:
<p>Naturalism is based on two main messages, what are they?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There will eventually be a scientific explanation for the supernatural...• Nature is all there is...
<p>We have discussed at least 7 theories of how life began. Consider two or three of these statements and discuss how they can be accepted as being true without being proven to be so.</p>	



OR



Critical Thinking: Answer True or False and DEFEND your choice

1 There is a conflict between science and Christianity. True or False - (Defend your answer.)

2 Science is based on facts, while Christianity is based on faith. True or False - (Defend your answer)

3 It is possible for non-minds to **produce** information. True or False - (Defend your answer)

4 As long as gravity exists, the universe can and will be created from nothing. True or False - (Defend your answer)

5 A naturalistic worldview does not conflict with the creation account of the Bible. True or False - (Defend your answer)

Lesson 6: Skepticism: Give me the Bible...wait, how can I know the Bible is reliable?

Plan for this chapter:

- Let's take a moment to discuss important terms such as "skepticism" and "hyper-skepticism." It's essential to understand the difference between the two.
- Next, the class will learn about the distinction between proving an idea and supporting an idea. Proving an idea requires only one piece of evidence, such as the equation $1+1=2$. On the other hand, supporting an idea involves multiple lines of evidence, such as the credibility and authenticity of the Bible.
- A discussion led by the teacher will take place to distinguish between claims that require reasoned faith and those that can be tested and supported by evidence.

Understanding the terms:



- **Faith** - Having complete trust and strong belief in someone or something is often accompanied by loyalty backed by strong conviction. From a biblical perspective, a believer's faith is founded upon the truth and facts discovered in the Bible. (Hillary Morgan Ferrer)
- **Blind faith** - "To trust that something good will happen or that all will be well, even though there's not a bit of evidence to back up that hope."¹⁶ (Steinbrenner)
- **Skepticism** - an attitude of doubt or a disposition to incredulity either in general or toward a particular object¹⁷
- **Hyper-skepticism**- the attitude that doubts everything until enough evidence is given to be convinced, but in actuality, no amount of evidence and/or proof will ever be enough to convince the person. (Read the footnotes for further reading: Feyerabend,¹⁸ Dancy,¹⁹ Rangel²⁰)
- **Empiricism** - The approach of acquiring knowledge solely through human senses, observation, and experimentation.
- **Dogmatism** - The strong expression of opinions as if they were facts. Even though the supporting evidence is questionable or insufficient.

¹⁶ Blind faith would be in the same category as "foolhardy". And that word does have a dictionary definition. "Foolhardy" is "unwisely bold or venturesome; rash". Driving 100 mph on your motorcycle without a helmet, with the simple belief that nothing could go wrong, would be foolhardy. It would be operating on blind faith. It would be unwise. (Steinbrenner)

¹⁷ Religious skepticism should not be confused with outright atheism or irreligion, although atheists can be considered one type of religious skeptic. The religious skeptic may simply be someone who has serious doubts or who is noncommittal toward religion. Actually, religious skepticism is nothing new. The famous skeptics Nathaniel (John 1:45-47) and Thomas (John 20:25) were disciples of Jesus who had their doubts. Yet it does seem today that religious skepticism is growing more prevalent.

¹⁸ Radical skepticism or radical skepticism in British English) is the philosophical position that knowledge is most likely impossible. (Feyerabend)

¹⁹ Radical skeptics hold that doubt exists as to the veracity of every belief and that certainty is therefore never justified. To determine the extent to which it is possible to respond to radical skeptical challenges is the task of epistemology or "the theory of knowledge". (Dancy)

²⁰ The type of skepticism that demands flawless information before accepting a decision is not a commendable trait. It is often used as a tool to influence others into acting in ways that may harm their interests but benefit the demagogue or the individuals who have hired them. This skeptical approach must be countered with the assertion that "We possess sufficient information to make a decision. Unless you can provide valid reasons why we should not proceed, it is rational and even necessary for us to act upon what we know."

- **Old-atheist** - The old-fashioned No Theist, or the “I don’t believe there is a God.”
- **New-atheist** - The new definition that makes it difficult to debate because the person does not take a real position. The type of atheist says, “I have a lack of God-belief.” In other words, the Old-atheist could be reasoned with by showing evidence and truth, the new atheist argues based on their mental truth, as in, “my truth and my belief - an ever-moving target.)²¹
- **Meme** - a unit of cultural information spread by imitation. The term *meme* (from the Greek *mimema*, meaning “imitated”) was introduced in 1976 by British evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins in his work *The Selfish Gene*. (Rogers)²²



How these terms and ideas are used today:

In the past, some atheists would argue about evolution, creationism, the Big Bang, and other things and attribute their ideas to naturalism and science. Their arguments would be based on scientific evidence and theories. Honesty and fidelity to science and truth was their guiding principle -just as the X-Files T.V. series motto, “The Truth is Out There.” Once a theory or hypothesis was disproven, they would disavow it and move on. A true atheist is not a hyper-skeptic. In other words, a skeptic will question and seek out the truth - the real truth and be satisfied once the truth is found.

In contrast, there are those who identify as modern and socially aware, with a preference for information that aligns with the values promoted by Google. They also tend to approach information with a high level of skepticism or **hyper-skepticism**. Their desire is not to seek

²¹ The New Atheist can be equated to the childhood game of hide-n-seek or tag. As long as the person stands on “base” he is safe. Often times the person can claim a rock, a bush, a light pole, or whatever he wishes and feels as the safe base. The New Atheist believes that as long as they can imagine their reality it’s true and everything else is false.

²² In the early 21st century, Internet memes, or **memes** that emerge within the culture of the [Internet](#), gained popularity, bringing renewed interest to the meme concept. Internet memes spread from person to person through imitation, typically by e-mail, [social media](#), and various types of [Web sites](#). They often take the form of pictures, videos, or other media containing cultural information that, rather than mutating randomly, have been deliberately altered by individuals. Their deliberate alteration, however, violates Dawkins’s original **conception** of memes, and, for that **reason**, despite their fundamental similarity to other types of memes, Internet memes are considered by Dawkins and certain other scholars to be a different representation of the meme concept. (Rogers)

out absolute truth because the only truth that exists is their own reality. It is the story of "All your life, Charlie Brown. All your life." Here is where Charlie Brown spots the football and prepares to kick it. He sprints towards it with the expectation that Lucy will keep it steady, but unfortunately, she pulls it away from him every single time.

Imagine being in a debate with a **hyper-skeptic** who argues, "There is no concrete and indisputable proof for the existence of God, heaven, or hell." Consider this statement carefully. How would you respond to this argument? What evidence is available that is indisputable? The argument does not reference the Bible, so it cannot be used as evidence. Additionally, it does not mention emotions, dreams, visions, or personal experiences. Essentially, the challenge is asking for evidence that can be measured and verified in a scientific laboratory, which is an impossible task. Those who are poorly trained or inexperienced may struggle with this type of argument and become hyper-skeptical. This is the type of "debate" threads your children are being exposed to on the internet, social media, and television. It is imperative to empower them with knowledge, truth, and the ability to identify these types of devilish tactics. (An example of a debate thread": Debate: Can atheists call themselves true skeptics?²³)

Questioning and being **skeptical** is not necessarily a bad thing. In fact, there are examples in the Bible of God's servants, like Gideon²⁴, Mary²⁵, and Thomas the Apostle²⁶, who were initially skeptical of their tasks. Paul commanded the Thessalonians to "...examine everything *carefully*; hold fast to that which is good."²⁷ The Bereans also were commended for their eagerness for wanting to know the truth, "for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."²⁸ However, once they received enough evidence and confirmation, they accepted the truth and were convinced. We should strive to be like these types of skeptics - questioning, but open to accepting the truth once it is shown to us.²⁹

The Apostle Paul provides insight to the human thought process once it has deviated from the mind of God. "...but they became futile in their [own] reasonings, and their senseless hearts were darkened."³⁰ "Claiming to be wise, they became fools"³¹ "For they exchanged the truth of God for falsehood, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the

²³ <https://bit.ly/43j0RGx>

²⁴ Judges 6:12-18

²⁵ Luke 1:34-38

²⁶ John 20

²⁷ 1 Thessalonians 5:21

²⁸ Acts 17:11

²⁹ 2 Peter 1:21; Isaiah 55:8-9

³⁰ Romans 1:21

³¹ Romans 1:22

Creator, who is blessed forever.”³² “And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a depraved mind, to do those things that are not proper,” Human wisdom is often prompted and fed by pride. This is what the devil used to convince Eve to question God’s goodness and replace the wisdom of God with human wisdom. Once that happens, we default to **empiricism** and **dogmatism**. According to Paul’s teachings to the Romans, the Gentiles gave up the wisdom of God for human wisdom, claiming to be wise, but in reality, they became foolish in their reasoning.

Proving a Fact and Supporting a Fact

There is a difference between proving a fact and supporting a fact. As already stated earlier, $1+1=2$ can be proven with some concrete proofs and maybe a few pieces of evidence, Once proven, the fact is accepted.³³

Regarding the Bible, we accept that the original text does not exist. However, we do have in our possession 5824 copies in the original Greek of the New Testament, and, when you count other languages (Latin, Syriac, Coptic and Arabic, there are more than 20,000!) New Testament Scholar Daniel Wallace puts it this way, “The average classical Greek writer has less than 20 copies of his works still in existence. Stack them up, and they’re 4 feet high. If you stack up copies of the New Testament manuscripts, they would be over a mile high.” (Perry) The New Testament manuscripts provide a remarkably coherent story from start to finish. It’s important to evaluate these manuscripts as we would any other historical document. Following are several tests used as evidence or tests to prove the reliability of the New Testament.

1. **Multiple, independent sources contributed to the New Testament:** The Bible is a collection of 66 books of letters, poems, and historical documents that span thousands of years of human history. These books were written by about 40 different authors and offer us a coherent story from beginning to end. Finally, there is not contradiction in the message of the Gospel and Messiah.
2. There are **thousands of New Testament Manuscripts:** If we had 100 copies of a document, it would be simple to compare them and identify any discrepancies in the text. As an example, there exist roughly 1800 copies of Homer’s Iliad, making it the most abundant ancient manuscript, aside from the Bible. Comparatively, the works of Demosthenes have around 400 copies, while Julius Caesar’s writings have only 10. Roman historians Tacitus and Pliny have 20 and 7 copies, respectively. It is universally agreed upon by historians that the authenticity of these manuscripts is not in question.

³² Romans 1:25

³³ Back in 1910, Alfred North Whitehead and Russell authored "Principia Mathematica," a book that took 1000 pages to prove that $1+1=2$. At the time, much of the syntax we use today was not yet established, so their extensive work was understandable. (Alfred North Whitehead and Russell)

3. The Gospels and epistles are a **collection of eyewitness accounts**: The writers of the New Testament personally witnessed the events surrounding the Lord Jesus Christ and His miracles. What sets their accounts apart is their attention to detail, emphasizing its significance. These details are paramount. Did you know that in just one chapter of the book of Acts, chapter 16, Luke mentions 84 specific details that have been verified by history and archaeology? It's truly remarkable!³⁴ The Gospel of John contains 59 confirmed or historical facts. (Blomberg) There are no other ancient manuscripts that possess such a high level of historically verifiable authenticity.
4. **Non-Christian sources** confirm the most important details: What is the most significant aspect of Jesus' life? It is his resurrection! Even non-Christian sources, with no vested interest, mention Jesus within 150 years of his life. They corroborate every detail of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection as described in the New Testament. In comparison, Tiberius Caesar, the Roman Emperor of that era, is only referenced by 9 non-Christian sources. However, Jesus is mentioned 43 times in Christian sources, while Tiberius only receives 10 mentions - the modern-day social media likes.
5. **Evidence from history and archaeology supports the accuracy of the New Testament**: Evidence from history and archaeology supports the accuracy of the New Testament.: The New Testament mentions 30 characters whose names and roles have been historically and archaeologically verified. Among the notable discoveries are the burial box containing the remains of High Priest Joseph Caiaphas, who condemned Jesus to death, and the Pilate Stone, linked to the crucifixion of Jesus. Archaeology has also corroborated other claims, such as the unearthing of the Pool of Siloam mentioned in John 9:1-2 in 2004, and the excavation of the Pool of Bethesda from John 5:1-9 in 1889. Additionally, artifacts like coins and inscriptions have confirmed the existence of figures like Syrian governor Quirinius from Luke 2:1-3 and King Lysanias from Luke 3:1. (Mykytiuk)³⁵
6. It **fulfills prophecies** from ancient times in incredible ways: There exist 9 distinctive prophecies in the Old Testament that precisely predict the birth, nature, and existence of Jesus of Nazareth. These were recorded many centuries before his birth, yet they provide an exact account of the events that would unfold in his life. Notably, Daniel 7, Psalm 22, and Isaiah 53 contain prophecies about his birth, death, and resurrection that are remarkably accurate. Some people even believed that these prophecies were written after the events had occurred, but the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 proved otherwise.
7. The **New Testament encompasses a range of experiences, including both positive and negative aspects of Jesus' disciples**: When creating or enhancing a tale about a brave protagonist and their accomplices, it's unlikely to include

³⁴Hemer

³⁵ In short, the list in this article is a conservative count whose firm identifications can be trusted. A long list of untrustworthy results can be initially exciting but can very easily turn out to be mostly worthless. Technical details regarding these identifications may be found in sources cited in the table's endnotes, which are available online at www.biblicalarchaeology.org/50.

any information that could potentially embarrass them. However, this is precisely what the New Testament manuscripts do. The followers of Jesus are portrayed as inept, doubtful individuals who lack courage and conviction in their beliefs. His disciples – even his own family – consider Jesus to be out of his mind and a deceiver. Some call him a “drunkard” and “demon-possessed.” But, most amazingly, he suffers the worst kind of defeat any devout Jew could ever imagine. He is hung on a tree (the ultimate curse in the Jewish culture) and killed. These are not the kind of things that anyone would use to convince you that their hero was a God. They are the kinds of things that a writer includes because he is documenting events that actually occurred.

8. The **New Testament verifies the Old Testament**: There is no doubt about the reliability of the New Testament, which serves the purpose of guiding us toward the Messiah, His death, burial, resurrection, and the salvation He bestowed upon humanity. Therefore, we can trust its message.³⁶

After examining all the evidence and considering additional factors, one can make an informed decision about the reliability and accuracy of the Bible. There are numerous facts supporting the authenticity of the Bible. Denying its validity is not only unwise, but it also displays a rigid and overly skeptical mindset.

The message that is being peddled by both hyper skeptics and new age enthusiasts.

- **It's impossible to be certain about everything**, which means we can't be certain about anything. In the words of the philosopher Rene Descartes, “I think, therefore I am.” Or, “As I think I am – My reality is my truth.”
- **Religion is child abuse**. What would make sensitive people think religion is child abuse? Could it be accountability? Hell? Punishment? An internet search with the phrase “religion is child abuse” rendered ~ 67,200,000 results (0.45 seconds)! Most of those results were against religion and in favor of secularist views. Starting from a secular perspective, it is believed that the idea of a higher power is merely a figment of imagination. However, the fear of someone's belief in this higher power often results in lengthy and fear-inducing arguments, claiming that religion is a form of child abuse.
- **Man is not just equal to God; he's superior to God**. The pride that was fed to Adam and Eve was not equality with God but being greater than God. Romans 1:17 to the end of the chapter records man's desire to be wiser and greater than God. This is the ultimate level of pride.

³⁶ Books on “Undesigned Scriptural Coincidences”: Lydia McGrew, Hidden In Plain View: [Undesigned Coincidences in the Gospels and Acts](#); Eric Lounsbery, [J. J. Blunt's Undesigned Scriptural Coincidences](#); Walter C. Kaiser, [The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable and Relevant?](#); F. F. Bruce, [The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?](#); Mark D. Roberts, [Can We Trust The Gospels?](#); The New Testament: Too Embarrassing to Be False by Frank Turek ([DVD](#), [Mp3](#) and [Mp4](#)); Why We Know the New Testament Writers Told the Truth by Frank Turek ([DVD](#), [Mp3](#) and [Mp4](#)); The Top Ten Reasons We Know the NT Writers Told the Truth by Frank Turek ([Mp3](#))

- Belief in God is like believing in Santa Clause - eventually, we will grow out of it. True faith in God is not easy - that is a fact! To equate faith in God to Santa Clause is not only disrespectful to all true Christians, it is offensive to our intelligence. Here is the reason: The atheist has based his faith on unproven theories and unsubstantiated assumptions of an explosion that happened billions of years ago that took place some time and somewhere, and that eventually, over billions of years of evolution, produced the human race with the perfect brain, body and central nervous system! By the way, they have yet to figure out an explanation of where the spark came from to ignite the explosion! That's the **foundation** of their entire faith. Talk about Santa Clause and Tooth Fairy fantasies! While the Christians believe that in the beginning, **God** created the heavens and the earth.



LESSON 6: SKEPTICISM

Give me the Bible...wait, how can I know the Bible is reliable?

- 1 Some say "Sometimes all you need is faith. Just believe. Is that what God asks of us, to have blind faith? Why or why not?"

- 2 Watch this video on "How to Analyze and Evaluate Historical Documents" and explain how this applies to the authenticity of the Bible. (<https://bit.ly/3ouK4em>)

- 3 In your own words explain the difference between a skeptic and an hyper-skeptic.

- 4 Give Bible examples of skeptics and hyper-skeptics.

- 5 Was Paul being dogmatic in 1 Corinthians 2:2? Why or Why not? Was he justified? Why or why not?

- 6 How do you think hyper-skepticism is dangerous thinking to the minds of young children?

- 7 Is "My own reality" thinking something new?

- 8 How does The Emperor's New Clothes tale relate to hyper-skepticism - believing in one's own deception?

- 9 How many pieces of evidences will it take to convince a person who constantly moves the goal posts?

- 10 Find at least three skeptics in the Bible and discuss if their skepticism was healthy or unhealthy.



LESSON 6: SKEPTICISM

Give me the Bible...wait, how can I know the Bible is reliable?

The different concerns raised by skepticism are valid, albeit sometimes misapplied. Utilizing the passages provided, how does the Bible tackle these issues that skeptics bring up regarding Christianity?

Religion is child abuse –read Proverbs 22:6	Ephesians 6:4	Hebrews 12:7-11
Belief in God is like belief in Santa Claus– read John 16:33	Philippians 4:6-7	James 4:13-15
Religion keeps people from asking questions –read Colossians 2:8	1 Thessalonians 5:21	1 John 4:1



LESSON 6: SKEPTICISM

Give me the Bible...wait, how can I know the Bible is reliable?

Determine which claims require reasoned faith to be accepted and which ones can be tested and backed up with evidence. It may not be as easy as you think.

Claim	Faith	Evidence
The Bible was reliably transmitted.		
Faithful Christians are going to heaven.		
Jesus was a real person who lived, died, and resurrected.		
Jesus' death means we too will resurrect and have eternal life.		
Adultery is morally wrong.		
The only true knowledge is that which can be tested through scientific methods.		
God is good.		

Final thoughts:

- Simply making a statement or claim does not qualify it as evidence. Can you clarify the distinction between an assertion of truth and an established fact to someone? How?

- It's important to be attentive to the commercials you encounter on TV, radio, or print. Take time to ask yourself these questions: What claims are the advertisers making? Can these claims be proven? Are they making a claim at all? Has the advertisement provided any supporting data for their statement?

- In conclusion, it's important to read these scriptures within their context. All glory goes to God.

- James 2:19
- John 12:37
- Hebrews 11:1

Lesson 7: Postmodernism: The Truth is, Wait, there is no Truth!

A Russian proverb says claims that "One word of truth outweighs the world." (Mohler). Russian writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn was willing to die on the foundation of this proverb. He launched a decades-long campaign full of suffering imprisoned by the Russian Gulag with the faith in God that the Russian citizens would one day find the strength to resist the communist regime. His faith was based on the ideology that the people would see beyond the lies of Russian propaganda, systemic oppression, and pure terror that misled the masses and eventually see **the truth**.

On July 4th, 1776, fifty-six men signed the Declaration of Independence, voicing "the unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America," proclaimed, "We hold these **Truths to be self-evident**: that all Men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights: that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit suit of Happiness."

Thomas Jefferson, John Hancock, and others argued their case by presupposing that **truth** was **objective** and **knowable**, that it rested on "the laws of nature and nature's God," and that it supported their position against the British. These individuals held the belief that truth should never be twisted or distorted for the purpose of political advantage. They believed in acknowledging, honoring, and following the truth. They held that the truth is not a product of human manipulation, nor can it be dissolved by military or institutional power. **Once the truth is truth, it remains truth.**

On August 28, 1963, standing before 200,000 people, Martin Luther King, Jr., said in his now-famous speech, "In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men would be guaranteed the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness... it is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned...I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning ing of its creed: **'we hold these truths to be self evident**; that all men are created equal, and that one day all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, 'free at last! free at last! thank God Almighty, we are free at last!'"

MLK, Jr., had a way with words, but we should not get lost in the rhythm and flow of those words. The underlying message was his moral appeal was **that truth would win out** in the end - despite hatred and violence - **nothing could change the truth.**

For over a millennium, men and women, philosophers and politicians, prophets and saints, have spoken and staked their lives on the solid foundation called the truth - it is unchangeable - **even with the passing of time.**

An Appalachian proverb claims that "The truth will stand when this world is on fire."
(Dotson)

Yet, postmodernists say, "Truth? What truth?"



- It seems that the concept of "truth" is elusive and difficult to define.
- It can be argued that the concept of absolute truth does not exist.
- It may be difficult to determine the truth as it is often subjective and open to interpretation.
- I'm sorry, but I'm afraid there is no universal truth to rely on.
- Perhaps it's important to acknowledge that the concept of an absolute truth may not exist.

No matter how it is reworded, it says the same lie. According to postmodernism, the concept of absolute truth does not exist. Therefore, it is impossible to know anything with certainty. As a result, individuals lack a firm footing, and the concept of truth is both subjective and malleable, subject to personal interpretation and discretion.



In art, for example, Joseph Kosuth showcases a single chair in three distinct forms - as an actual manufactured chair, a photograph, and a replica of a dictionary definition for the term "chair." This piece has been observed by millions and interpreted in various ways. While some have dismissed it as an "installation," others have been moved to tears while standing in the Museum of Modern Art due to their profound emotional interpretation.



Kosuth, Joseph. *One and Three Chairs*.

As I observe the room, my eyes fall upon an aged photograph of a chair, then a real chair, and a definition affixed to the wall. Additionally, I notice a fortunate individual who managed to deceive an art critic into believing that a chair could be perceived in three distinct ways: through photographs, in person, and through language. This individual then proceeded to draw a parallel between chairs and human beings, suggesting that both can be interpreted in similar ways. Can any one say, "ka-ching\$\$ \$?"

Dangerous ground for our children:

"I *did* not at all *mean* with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world." (1 Corinthians 5:10) **Please explain this scripture within the chapter context.**

It is impossible to keep our children completely free from evil influences. So it is important to be vigilant of their surroundings and intuitive to their questions. Our children are full of questions and as long as we have a willing ear they will ask us. When our ear is no longer willing they will quit asking **us**, but they will not quit asking. Therein is the danger. They will continue to ask. But **who** they ask is extremely dangerous. We need to make sure we are ready to listen and to give them true and solid answers. Our children know when we give them pat answers. **Why should we not brush off our children's questions?**

One time, my six-year-old posed a question that caught me off guard. We were on our way to church on a Wednesday evening when my daughter suddenly asked, "Daddy, where did we come from?" My wife gave me a knowing look and I answered, "God created us and that's where we originated from." My daughter seemed to accept this answer and we continued on our way without further discussion. However, I knew we needed to revisit the topic at a later time. We decided to address the question during our weekly "How did your week go" family time on Friday evenings. My daughter had been watching a cartoon that presented the Big Bang theory, evolution, and prehistoric creatures. Innocent entertainment had turned into subtle indoctrination! During dinner, we discussed the theory of evolution, the hidden agenda of Disney, and other related topics. We emphasized the importance of open dialogue and encouraged our children to ask **us** questions whenever they had doubts or concerns. **What are some ways we can encourage our young and teen children to ask us questions?**

Post-modernism seems to be pervasive in our society. A Polish immigrant sister, currently residing in Hammond, Indiana, shares that over two decades ago (now in 2023), during her visit to Poland, the government was promoting advertisements that portrayed gay adult-child relationships as normal. She recalls seeing these ads at various public places such as airports, train stations, and bus stops. (Lopez) Unfortunately, this trend has spread to America, and our public schools are increasingly bold in their efforts to incorporate all things post-modern while excluding anything contrary to it from their curriculum. What is their defense for the curriculum?



"It's also important to add information about LGBTQ relationships and mental health to health and sex education lessons, Levin said, because, today, parents who are openly gay or transgender are more common. Levin said she plans to have a therapist talk to students about gender and sexual identities. "That conversation I have not seen in a published text," Levin said. "Levin plans to have LGBTQ curriculum material for the ninth-grade

wellness class this year, and she's working on gathering material for the middle school level. To add diversity to classroom libraries, the district recently sent a flyer to Easthampton parents with a list of books the district would like to receive as gifts this holiday season. The list includes "Branded by the Pink Triangle," by Ken Setterington, about homosexuals in Nazi Germany, as well as other books by Asian, American Indian and Latino authors." (Ashworth - Schools look to expand LGBTQ inclusiveness)

Postmodernism and Truth:

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can understand it?"
Jeremiah 17:9 **Explain what God meant when Jeremiah wrote these words. Be sure to stay within the Jeremiah 17 context.**

Postmodernism revolves around the idea of truth and its existence. The question is, can truth be known, and if yes, how? Do you recall Kosuth's artwork "One and Three Chairs"? It highlights the distinction between the object and the subject. The object, which in this case are chairs, remains unchanged and objective. Although it may differ in color, material, or size, the concept of a chair remains the same. People (the subjects who are subjective) may never come to a unanimous agreement on what exactly a chair is, and their interpretations of it may vary greatly and even evolve over time.

Now we come to one of several dilemmas:

- **First**, all truth statements can no longer be stated as a matter of fact without fear of criticism. For example, at one time, people could say, as a matter of fact, "Abortion is wrong." That would have been a true and objective statement. That statement must now be qualified this way: "Abortion is wrong *for me*." This has gone from being objective to subjective. To state it any other way it considered misogynistic, ignorant, and hate speech.
- **Secondly**, postmodernism has dictated that no one can call morality into question. Lying is really not wrong because what is considered lying to you may not be considered lying to another person; hence lying is wrong **for me** but not **for you. When is lying wrong? (Elisha 2 Kings 6; Egyptian midwives Ex. 1:15-21)**
- **Further**, in America, more and more citizens are turning to the government and policymakers to determine what is right and wrong. Many Americans have embraced the belief that they are capable of determining what is right and wrong without relying on divine guidance. This viewpoint is often accompanied by the belief that there is no absolute moral truth. It seems that people tend to base their moral beliefs on the laws and policies implemented by the government rather than on biblical teachings. However, it's important to remember that governments are run by flawed human beings. As a nation, we seem to struggle with making consistent policy decisions. This inconsistency can have serious consequences for citizens who rely on the government to guide their moral compass.

- **Finally**, making moral decisions solely based on an individual or institution in the secular world will lead to a shaky and unstable foundation. When humans change the truth for convenience and leave God out of the equation, we become like Adam and Eve, looking for fig leaves to cover our shame. Our remedies end up being pitifully inadequate.

Think about this:

As a society, we take pride in our intellectual progress and enlightenment in the **postmodern era**. We value freedom of thought and accept diversity in race, gender, and sexuality. We acknowledge and respect a woman's right to make choices about her own body without judgment. Our society has come a long way in understanding and expressing emotions, allowing individuals to choose their gender and sexual orientation. Even the United States military has acknowledged the importance of mental health by issuing "Stress" and "Time-Out" cards to soldiers during boot camp.³⁷ Some believe that our society has progressed to a point where we are more liberated, intelligent, improved, and prosperous than ever before - thanks to postmodern thinking. (Romans 1:22, 25, 28-32)

The truth? It's estimated that around 32 million adults in the United States cannot read.³⁸ There are NBA athletes earning millions of dollars and signing brand deals with foreign companies who use slave labor to make their shoes, and these athletes decry racism and inequality. At the same time, we look up to them as civil rights activists.³⁹ While the ILO estimates there are 50 million slaves worldwide and about 24 million sex slaves.⁴⁰ Hate speech is everywhere - online, in person, and in print - one could argue that we have not become a nicer society even with all the enlightenment. Finally, abortion, the woman's right to choose, is now seen as the pinnacle of postmodern thinking. The Guttmacher Institute reported that in 2020 there were 930,160 abortions, while the CDC reported that there were 615,991. But whatever you do don't call abortion murder. Yes, we have become enlightened. But, who can challenge these things as right or wrong if the truth is subjective? What is the difference between all of these things listed and, say, Hitler's Holocaust?

³⁷ He finally bursts from the barracks shouting into the air how he couldn't handle the stress and he was done with camp and its stupid rules. Interwoven into this was the standard myriad of expletives that one would expect from such an outburst. As a former noncommissioned officer watching this all occur, there was no doubt that this young man would be sent home immediately. How could he lead soldiers; he couldn't even handle the stress from not having a towel? To my great distress, he was back in training within hours. He had been issued, by our cadre, a half sheet of paper which stated that if he felt too anxious he could walk away and have a "safe place" to reframe his thoughts and collect himself. At the end of the month he graduated from the course with the rest of us. Worse than that however, was when I saw him several years later as a military intelligence officer while at the National Training Center in California, he had been promoted to captain and had troops under his direction. (Wadler)

³⁸ Approximately 32 million adults in the United States can't read, according to the U.S. Department of Education and the National Institute of Literacy. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development found that 50 percent of U.S. adults can't read a book written at an eighth-grade level. (Strauss)

³⁹ The call for human rights remains a motif throughout American sports media. As Kanter Freedom's message remains taboo in NBA circles, the Association may be showing its hand on the duplicitous nature of doing business at the cost of violating fundamental human rights. (Avila)

⁴⁰ Fifty million people were living in modern slavery in 2021, according to the latest Global Estimates of Modern Slavery. Of these people, 28 million were in forced labour and 22 million were trapped in forced marriage. The number of people in modern slavery has risen significantly in the last five years. 10 million more people were in modern slavery in 2021 compared to 2016 global estimates. Women and children remain disproportionately vulnerable. Modern slavery occurs in almost every country in the world, and cuts across ethnic, cultural and religious lines. More than half (52 per cent) of all forced labour and a quarter of all forced marriages can be found in upper-middle income or high-income countries. (International Labour Organization)

Postmodernism concludes that truth is not an absolute but a construct of our own making. It is what we, as individuals and as communities, decide it to be. No single objective truth exists independently of our beliefs and experiences. Instead, there are many different truths, each of which is valid from a certain point of view. These truths may be disconnected from one another, and they may not fit together into a neat, rational scheme.

Modern-day Christianity - An extremely dangerous field:

Some preachers have adopted postmodern thinking, which views truth as relative and subjective. Notice the definition of "TRUTH" as given by a tele-evangelist and famous self-help author:



Truth is a complex concept that has been debated by philosophers for centuries. There is no single definition of truth that is universally accepted, but there are a few common characteristics that are often associated with truth.

- Truth is correspondence to reality. A true statement is one that accurately reflects the way things really are.
- Truth is objective. It is not influenced by personal feelings or beliefs.
- Truth is universal. It is true for everyone, regardless of their individual circumstances.

However, there are also some cases where these characteristics may not apply. For example, some truths are subjective, meaning that they are true for one person but not for another. Additionally, some **truths are provisional**, meaning that they may be true today but not tomorrow.

Ultimately, the **question of what is truth is a philosophical one** that can only be answered by each individual. However, the characteristics of truth listed above can provide a framework for thinking about this important concept.

Here are some additional thoughts on truth:

- Truth is important because it allows us to make sense of the world around us.
- Truth can be used to build trust and relationships.
- Truth can be used to challenge injustice and oppression.
- Truth can be used to promote understanding and compassion.

In a world where there is so much misinformation and disinformation, it is more important than ever to seek out truth. We can do this by being critical thinkers, by evaluating sources

carefully, and by being open to new information.



Postmodernism and Public/Private Education:

Teachers and college professors have traditionally been responsible for teaching students objective truths, critical thinking skills and preparing them for their chosen field of study.

Some schools teach students that objective truths are socially constructed and can be used to promote power. In other words, tolerance, diversity, autonomy, and fairness are the highest virtues to which every person must bow or else they should be shamed and outcast from society. This should not be the norm, yet somehow it has become the norm. Businesses have been put out of business because they have refused to bow down to these norms, and politicians have been shamed out of office because they have refused to bow down. Teachers and university professors have been fired for the same reason.

So when your child comes home from his first semester of university and suddenly begins to disagree with family values, you can thank the university for that.

So what do we do?

Adults and children are not immune to this way of thinking. Television and social media bombard everyone with postmodern thinking. So what do we do? Everything mentioned in this chapter seems like a dog chasing its tail, a no-win situation. But there are some things we can do to counteract postmodernism.

- **First, we must understand that truth is changing before our lying eyes and it is called postmodernism.** Public schools are advocating pornography and transgenderism education via books and curriculum. (Baker)^{41, 42, 43} If this is happening in our schools, coming from some of our pulpits, streamed via the internet and cell phones, then the battle seems uphill. But awareness of the enemy's strategies is part of fighting this battle.
- **Secondly, teach your children to find inconsistencies with this way of thinking.** For example, if the truth is subjective and up to each individual to

⁴¹ The News 4 Trouble Shooters shared the content of some of those books with parents to get their opinions. Parents were shown four of the books on the list: two teach kids about being transgender, one is an illustrated book on whiteness. A fourth book, which led to the district's review, graphically describes a sex act between two ten-year-old boys. It was found in two elementary school libraries. (AVILA)

⁴² California has overhauled its sex education guidance for public school teachers, encouraging them to talk about gender identity with kindergartners and give advice to LGBT teenagers for navigating relationships and having safe sex. (Associated Press)

⁴³ It's also important to add information about LGBTQ relationships and mental health to health and sex education lessons, Levin said, because, today, parents who are openly gay or transgender are more common. Levin said she plans to have a therapist talk to students about gender and sexual identities. "That conversation I have not seen in a published text," Levin said. Levin plans to have LGBTQ curriculum material for the ninth-grade wellness class this year, and she's working on gathering material for the middle school level. To add diversity to classroom libraries, the district recently sent a flyer to Easthampton parents with a list of books the district would like to receive as gifts this holiday season. The list includes "Branded by the Pink Triangle," by Ken Settrington, about homosexuals in Nazi Germany, as well as other books by Asian, American Indian and Latino authors. (Ashworth)

determine, the result then is that everyone has their own rules. As every child has once dreamt at one time or another, "When I grow up, I will have no rules!" Imagine the consequences. This goes beyond littering. Violence will not be restrained. If there are no rules then this world will be chaos. An Afghan immigrant complained that crime in San Francisco is so out of control that, "At least in Afghanistan the Taliban will cut your hand off and people are afraid to commit such a crime." (Miller)

- **Teach your children to recognize these messages and above all teach them compassion.** There is no need to roll our eyes and gag, but to have the love and compassion that our Lord Jesus had during His earthly ministry and commanded us to have. People are confused and lost, in desperate need of the Light and of a Savior. (Luke 19:10; John 14:6; Luke 7:36-50) ⁴⁴
- **Accept that real truth is not dangerous, a power play, or a hate crime.** Postmodernism or wokeism would have us believe that real truth (what we call God's truth) is dangerous. When we stand our ground and use gender pronouns (a male is a he, and a female is a she), some people may accuse us of hate or not respecting "the person's identity." These are just smoke screens, and they often work. Stand your ground - do it respectfully, but stand your ground. Never give an inch of the God-truth (John 14:6). After all, "You will know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." (John 8:32). This truth is not subjective. It is objective. It is not my truth, it is God's truth.
- **Above all, learn the difference between objective and subjective truth.** This is going beyond the sky being blue or that a rock is a rock concept. This is on the plane of God's truth. For example, how many times have we approached Bible study this way: We read a scripture and then ask, "What does this scripture mean to me?" You may have not even noticed that subjective approach to your Bible study, but it is there and that is dangerous. As a matter of fact, almost every Bible study we have is riddled with subjective ideas. The way we should read the Bible is, "What does this passage mean?" Or "What is the author communicating to the intended audience?" Or better yet, "What is God teaching?" But not, "What does this mean to me?" The last approach is wrong because it has led many people down the wrong path. For example, I asked Bard (Google's AI) what he believes Mark 16:16 teaches. Note his response, "The truth is that Mark 16:16 is a complex verse that can be interpreted in a variety of ways. There is no one right answer to the question of what it means. Ultimately, it is up to each individual to decide what they believe." Albeit, this is Bard AI, but it is a result of "my truth" and "your truth."

⁴⁴ A man accompanied his wife to church. During the sermon, his cell phone went off with an off-color ringtone. His wife scolded him, the preacher called him out, and several members shook their heads in shame as they looked at him. He was embarrassed and quickly turned his phone off. "It was an accident." He whimpered to his wife. After the church services were over, he attempted to apologize but before he could say something a church member pointed to a sign that read, "God does not have a cell phone plan. Silence your phones in His house." The man felt so bad and ashamed. On the way home his wife told him she had never been so embarrassed before and that she hoped he would never bring his cell phone again. After lunch, the man went to a bar he had never been to, and sat alone at a table. Accidentally he knocked over his drink. He apologized and quickly looked for napkins to clean up his mess. Other customers quickly came over to help him, the waitress hurried over and said, "Don't worry about it." She gave him a drink on the house and two strangers sat with him. He has not returned to church but he has returned to the bar. How many times do we make people uncomfortable because they just don't fit "our mold?" Compassion and understanding can go a long way. Acceptance does not mean agreeing with a sinful lifestyle, but it does mean sitting with sinners to help them find Jesus.

POSTMODERNISM: THE TRUTH IS, WAIT, THERE IS NO TRUTH!

From the lesson define Postmodernism

From the lesson define Objective truth and give an example

From the lesson define Subjective truth and give an example

From the lesson define Objective truth and give an example

**Are questions bad?
Should parents encourage children to ask questions?**

Since we are created in God's image should we trust human reasoning? Why or why not?

POSTMODERNISM: THE TRUTH IS, WAIT, THERE IS NO TRUTH!

According to postmodernism truth and morality are subjective. What may be the consequences of this view?

Are you guilty of postmodern thinking?

Example: Abortion is wrong to me.
Stealing is ok sometimes.

Subjective Truth

Objective Truth

Where does it go? Arrange whether it is objective or subjective, and why?

God exists

Math is boring

There is no such thing as absolute truth

The Bible has copyist errors, therefore it cannot be trusted

The Bible has copyist errors, therefore it cannot be trusted

The Bible was written by men in a male-dominated society therefore, it is misogynistic.

POSTMODERNISM: THE TRUTH IS, WAIT, THERE IS NO TRUTH!

2 Timothy 2:15



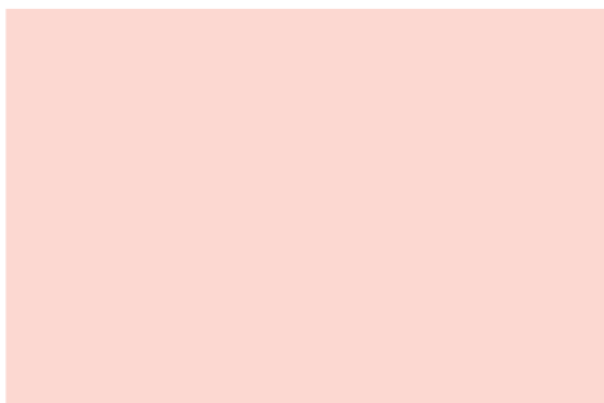
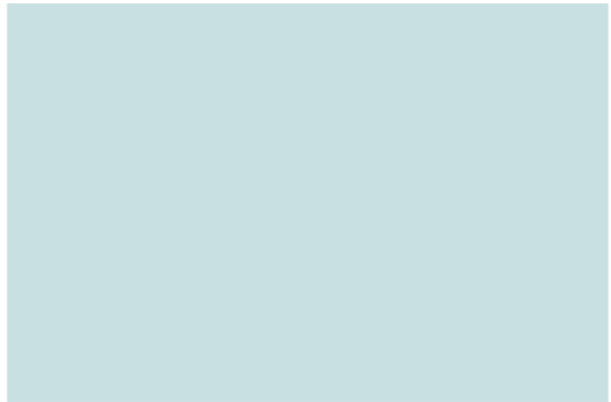
John 4:24



John 17:17



Proverbs 1:7



Chapter 8: Moral Relativism - Our current social experiment is, "Let's see what happens when you always put emotions in charge."

Several years ago, I visited a brother in Christ who was convalescing after foot surgery and played a few checkers games. As the game progressed, I learned that not everyone played by the same rules. For example, my opponent challenged a move I did not take by saying I had to take my jumps. I had never heard that rule before - I had to take my jumps? I thought a strategy game should be in my favor rather than my opponents. Guess what? He thought the same thing! So, I adapted to **his rules**. When it seemed he would lose the match, he offered to **change the rules** and play by **my rules**. By changing the rules mid-match, the advantage would be his.

The same is true with other games like Monopoly and Uno. The game makers have written out the rules, but the players have made their own rules, and every set of players have their own "house" rules.

This is what moral relativism is all about. Morality is relative. In other words, circumstances, society, individuals, governments, etc., decide what is moral and can change the definition at any time. Like the checkers game, it was difficult to win a match because the rules kept changing, so it is with moral relativism. The target keeps moving. Look at the word "relativism." This implies that morality is relative to something. When we see a crooked line, we measure its crookedness relative to a straight line. But what would happen if we changed the definition of a straight line? Moral relativism is a result of postmodernism. **If truth is always changing, then the result is that morality is constantly changing - or that morality is relative to the individual.** According to this perspective, morals are not absolute. What may be considered wrong for certain individuals in specific locations and periods may not be deemed wrong universally for everyone and in all situations.



Emotionalism and Moral Relativism:

You have probably been involved in or seen the "I'm here for the a Facebook debate. As the debate goes on and more people get one begins to notice that logic disappears and emotionalism AND THE RESPONSES ARE TYPED IN ALL CAPS TO SIGNIFY THAT THE PERSON IS NO LONGER CALM BUT IS YELLING TO ACCENTUATE THEIR POINT AND IS MAKING SURE EVERYONE IN THE THREAD CAN "HEAR" THEM ROAR! (Whew! I may end up with a "sore throat.") That is exactly what happens with moral relativism. Logic is thrown out the window, and emotionalism takes over the brain and discussion.



show" gif in involved, takes OVER



On May 11th, 2020, Aimee Arrambide, the executive director of the abortion rights nonprofit Avow Texas, testified before the House Judiciary Committee and was asked by

Representative Dan Bishop, "Do you believe that men can become pregnant and have abortions?" To which she responded, "Yes." Before that question, she was asked by Rep. Dan Bishop, R-N.C., to define what "a woman is," to which she responded, "I believe that everyone can identify for themselves."^{45, 46, 47} In what world is this logical? Can biological men become pregnant and have abortions? I think a great follow-up question would have been, "How?"

Moral Relativism is not new:

Going as far back as the Old Testament God's people have used emotionalism as a moral compass to justify their actions. Here are some examples:

- Kissing the cow
 - Hosea 13:2; "And now they sin more and more, And make for themselves cast metal images, Idols skillfully made from their silver, All of them the work of craftsmen. They say of them, "Let the people who sacrifice kiss the calves!"
 - The prophet condemned the lawlessness of Israelite society, with its widespread deceit, brutality, and immorality. The world of nature also suffered because of base morality. The rituals of ancient pilgrim sites of Gilgal and Bethel are criticized as shallow shams and renamed Bethel (House of God) as "Beth Aven" (house of wickedness). Why? They had accepted as normal and even participated in human sacrifices. The kings and princes were hot with wine and burning with passion and deceit. They undermined each other with intrigue and assassination. All of this was morally acceptable among God's people because it was also morally acceptable among the surrounding nations. God's people has a history of wanting to be like the nations surrounding it. (1 Samuel 8:20)
- Sacrificing their children to Molech (Leviticus 20:2-5; 1 Kings 11:4-11; 2 Kings 21:6; 2 Chronicles 28:1-4; Jeremiah 32:35)⁴⁸

⁴⁵ "I was empowered to make the decision to have an abortion because reproductive freedom was always part of our family's values. My father was an abortion provider in central and south Texas from the 1970s to 1990s. He switched his specialty from anesthesiology to obstetrics and gynecology in the 1970s, and after witnessing the repercussions of unsafe abortions before legalization, he decided to provide abortions as well. When I first learned he provided abortions, in addition to delivering babies, a child in elementary school told me my father killed babies. When I confronted my parents, I'm not sure I understood. So he took me to a clinic in Laredo, where he provided abortion one day every two weeks, and I witnessed the gratitude on the faces of those waiting in the clinic." (Arrambide)

⁴⁶ "Treating my bipolar disorder enabled me to take care of my father after his brain surgery resulted in a stroke. I was mentally healthy for the first time in my adult life and could be a full partner to my boyfriend, who is now my husband of 16 years. Before my father died, which was two months after my wedding, I promised him I would fulfill my dream and his dream for me and go to law school. I went back to college and was able to thrive. I moved to New York with my husband and attended law school. During law school, when I was ready, healthy, and thriving, I had two children. My pregnancies were physically and mentally very difficult. And after being a parent for the past eleven years, I have no doubt that if I hadn't had an abortion when I did, I would not have survived. My chosen pregnancies were not easy, but they were exactly that: chosen. My children are my whole world. A few years ago, I moved back to my home of Texas and have thrived. None of this would have been possible without my abortion. My abortion saved my life." (Ibid)

⁴⁷ Judiciary Committee Hearing video: <https://bit.ly/3qwV0Ji>

⁴⁸ History is replete with civilizations that have held morally repugnant attitudes concerning infants and children. The Nazis carried Jewish children off to killing fields and the gas chambers at Auschwitz. The Aztecs and Mayans sacrificed both children and adults to their gods. Exposing an unwanted child to the elements or wild animals was a common practice throughout the Greco-Roman world. The Carthaginians of North Africa sacrificed their infants and children to pagan gods over a period of several centuries. (<https://bit.ly/3MYGqlr>)

- The living babies would be thrown onto the outstretched arms of the red-hot bronze god. The babies would writhe, twist and scream in pain until they would die. To soothe their conscience and drown out the screams of pain, the people would beat on drums, clap their hands and make a lot of noise. ^{49,50} This had become morally acceptable in society - among God's people!
- In our modern society, a similar act of sacrifice is made almost daily by the thousands. It is not acceptable to call it a sacrifice or even murder, nor is it acceptable to criticize the act or the people involved. Criticizing this is considered as being intolerant and hate speech. This is called abortion. Babies are murdered by the thousands, their screams are drowned out by killing them inside the womb, and the consciences of those who do this are soothed by not calling the babies, babies but fetuses.
- Shifting the blame:

- When our first parents sinned, they did not do a "Mea culpa." instead, they blamed each other and everything else -ultimately God - but themselves. (Genesis 3:12ff). Adam and Eve were tempted with the coveted "apple:" lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Ultimately, this is the root of moral relativism. Self! ⁵¹



The fact of the matter is that it comes down to worshipping self. Some call it self-care, "taking care of me." No matter what shiny wrapper and bow is placed on it, it ends up the same, worshipping self.

Learn to recognize the Relativism Message:⁵²



- **What is true for you may not be true for me** - Imagine a balance scale with your truth on one side and someone else's on the other.

⁴⁹ "No, but with full knowledge and understanding they themselves offered up their own children, and those who had no children would buy little ones from poor people and cut their throats as if they were so many lambs or young birds; meanwhile the mother stood by without a tear or moan; but should she utter a single moan or let fall a single tear, she had to forfeit the money, and her child was sacrificed nevertheless; and the whole area before the statue was filled with a loud noise of flutes and drums [so that] the cries of wailing should not reach the ears of the people"

⁵⁰ J. D. Douglas and Merrill Tenney, Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary, ed. Moises Silva (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 149- 52. For a brief survey and additional references pertaining to the Canaanite religious pantheon, see Eugene H. Merrill, Kingdom of Priests (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008), 178-80.

⁵¹ In the book *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be*, Cornelius Plantinga describes the creation account as a picture of peace. Peace goes by the word *shalom* in the Bible, which he roughly translates "the way it's supposed to be." After humanity's failure in Eden and Israel's repeated failures in history, the prophets looked forward to an age to come—an age not decimated by what Plantinga calls the "vandalism of shalom." Human trafficking, addictions, government corruption, cycles of poverty, parental craving for successful children, and all the unsightly features of humanity trade in the vandalism of *shalom*. How did we get to this shattered earth mired by broken humans? The calamity in Eden tells the disastrous nature of subverting creation that contorts our bodies, our relationships, and the earth against us (Gen 3:16-19). When Israel's prophets dream of a "new age," they envisage an age to come ringing with the voice and timbre of old Eden—the way things are supposed to be. Indeed, all of history in the Bible recalls and retells the story of Eden. Deuteronomy portrays Israel's entrance into the Promised Land as Edenic fruitfulness (Deut 28:1-14). And the final age, which the apostle John is shown in visions, is described as a renewed Eden and Jerusalem combined (Rev 21:9-22:5). Is it possible that Eden, or something akin to it, is our destination in the age to come? If so, then we ought to understand the basics of what went wrong in the first Eden. (Johnson et al.)

⁵² Five points taken from Ferrer, Hillary Morgan. *Mama Bear Apologetics : [Empowering Your Kids to Challenge Cultural Lies]*. Harvest House Publishers, 2019.

- If each individual decides what truth is, whose truth wins? On the surface, having one's own truth sounds like the 1970's-1980's sitcom Fantasy Island.⁵³
- "It is utterly wrongheaded to say that something is "true for you but not for me." For example, what if I think fascism is true and you think liberal democracy is equally true? Should the fascist's repression be tolerated by the believer in liberal democracy? If not, on what grounds? Why not permit Stalinism or Satanism or Nazism? Without criteria to determine truth, this relativism fails miserably." (Copan)
- "At the beginning of his letter to Titus, the apostle Paul gives some advice to his "son in the faith" Titus, who is ministering to the people of Crete. Titus is facing a fair amount of hostile ideas. As if to say, "What did you expect?" Paul quotes Epimenides, a Cretan. He tells Titus, "Even one of their own prophets has said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.'" Most Bible readers catch the irony of the statement. If all Cretans are liars, then can Epimenides himself really be trusted?" The statement of Epimenides and relativism suffer from the same flaw. Epimenides claims to speak truth about the people of Crete. Yet he contradicts his truthfulness by calling himself a liar. Why believe Epimenides? Relativism claims to speak truth about at least one thing—namely, that truth can be "true for you but not for me." Yet it contradicts itself by claiming nothing is really true or false. Why believe the relativist if he has no truth to utter? The claims of relativists are like saying, "I can't speak a word of English" or "All generalizations are false." Our most basic reply to the relativist is that his statements are self-contradictory. They self-destruct. They are self-undermining. The relativist actually falsifies his own system by his self-referential statements like "Everyone's beliefs are true or false only relative to himself." If claims are only true to the speaker, then his claims are only true to himself. It is difficult to see why his claims should matter to us." (Ibid)
- **I am the only one who can determine my truth.** This is unlike "I chart my own course" or "I am in charge of my life." This is more like Copan said, "If a relativist is consistent, they must say, "Nothing is objectively true, including my own relativistic position. So you are free to accept my view or reject it." However, when a relativist says, "Everything is relative," they usually expect their hearers to believe their statement and adjust their lives accordingly. This is because they believe their statement applies to all statements except their own! Of course, the relativist doesn't likely believe that their relativistic position is simply true for themselves. This is a second error that relativists commit—the "self-excepting fallacy." They claim a statement holds true for everyone but themselves. Ironically, relativists are unwilling to relativize their own relativism. They are also

⁵³ Fantasy Island is a unique resort in the Pacific Ocean, where there is very little that the mysterious overseer, Mr. Roarke (Ricardo Montalban), cannot provide. Visitors can experience adventures that should be impossible, but this island can deliver. However, what actually happens is often far more than they expect as they face challenges that test their character in ways they never imagined.

unwilling to generalize their relativism since they make themselves an exception.” (Ibid)

- **Making my own choices (personal autonomy) is the highest priority.** “I knew I was not a boy since I was a child. Even my parents knew I was different. Now that I am an adult, I have a right to live my true identity. This is my truth and my choice. I don’t care what anyone else believes. This world and this life will never make sense until my body agrees with my identity.” These were the words of a 16-year-old boy arguing for complete transgender surgery.
- **Don’t force your truth on me.** This is America! What a mantra to live by. In this WOKE society, it’s all about “living **your** truth,” “being your individual,” and “don’t force your truth on me.” “It’s fair to point out to the relativist that statements like “That’s true for you, but not for me” are not only self-contradictory but guilty of this self-excepting fallacy. While this statement often shuts the door on further conversation, it need not. An appropriate response to such a relativistic statement might be this: “You obviously assume the universal validity of the statement ‘Something could be true for one person but not for another,’ but you imply that it is applicable to *everyone’s* beliefs but your own. But if you are being consistent—if your statement is only true *for you*, then I see no reason to think it applies to me.” (Ibid)
- **Love is love.** This is the most dangerous area because even Christians have contributed to this lie.
 - “God loves everybody, God is love.” (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:8, 16) Who can argue with this ULTIMATE truth? No one! Many progressive Christians reject Biblical truths on the deity of Christ, morality, gender, homosexuality, and salvation. ⁵⁴
 - God indeed loves everyone. The cause of our Lord's crucifixion is the sin of mankind, as mentioned in Romans 3:23 and 6:23. Due to this, God instructs everyone, everywhere to repent, as stated in Acts 17:30-31.
 - The true definition of love is not a blind, tolerant, no-holds-barred, anything-goes, type of relationship. 1 John 4:19 says, “We love because He loved us first.” God’s love for His creation is sacrificial and so must be ours. Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” (John 14:15ff). ⁵⁵
 - The Methodist church has recently lost nearly 5000 congregations because many do not accept the concept of Love is Love. (J. Brown).

⁵⁴ Progressive Christianity tends to reject the idea that the Bible is divinely inspired and has an authoritative truth that applies to every aspect of life. This ideology twists and distorts the clear teachings of Scripture on matters such as marriage, sexuality, and gender identity. Instead of following the Word of God, proponents of this movement invent their own misguided standards. They prioritize cultural trends over the Bible’s teachings, which is evident in their acceptance of gay marriage. While Progressive Christianity is concerned with issues of social and racial justice, it often overlooks the fundamental matter of God’s justice: how a holy and just God deals with sinful humans. Furthermore, this belief system tends to ignore the devastating consequences of personal sin. The Biblical teaching on Christ’s atoning work on the cross is frequently neglected or distorted.

⁵⁵ Jesus reminds his disciples that their relationship is built upon love and obedience. In this context **what I command** = the “new commandment,” to “love one another” (13:34). We are truly his disciples if we “love one another” (13:35). (Bryant and Krause)

- In order for this concept to be true everyone must be 100% accepting and tolerant of everyone and their actions, words, opinions, thoughts, orientation, politics, decisions, social class, etc., all the time and never complain or even come close to a rolling of the eyes. IMPOSSIBLE.



What is attractive about Moral Relativism?:

- Let's begin with Christians at two extremes:
 - The adherence to traditionalism and disregard for Romans 14 has led to a significant number of individuals either completely abandoning their faith or seeking out more progressive alternatives. Jesus, when He began His ministry at age 30, denounced the man-made traditions of the Pharisees that had stifled the spiritual growth of the people. (Matthew 15:1-20) Not much has changed since. Religious people are still holding on to some traditions that are not commandments from God with the excuse, "I know this does not violate God's commandments, but this we have to be careful what it could lead to..." Prevention is great; however, when it comes to God's Word, we should not impose upon other people what God has not bound. (Romans 14 <foods, special days, religious days ⁵⁶>; Colossians 2:16-23 ⁵⁷)
 - The other extreme is where people want some religion without restrictions.
- We have been conditioned to believe that the shiny and appealing object is the solution to all of our societal issues. We are being sold a false narrative with moral relativism.
 - **It can be helpful to broaden your perspective and identify the advocates of moral relativism.** These may include politicians who identify as progressives, certain prominent universities, and their faculty members. It is important to be mindful of their intentions, as they often

⁵⁶ Allow me to take a moment for a side point while we are here. There are many in the religious world and many Christians who think it is right or wrong to keep various holidays. Some think Christians should not participate in Halloween because of its pagan origins. Some think Christians must not participate in Christmas or decorate with Christmas things. Some say that we should not mark our birthdays as special days. Some think Christians should not keep national holidays like Independence Day on July 4th. This is one issue that Paul has made clear. If people want to abstain from keeping certain holidays, they have every right to do so. On the other hand, if people want to keep various holidays and memorials, they also have the right to observe those days. The key is that whichever we choose, we do so in honor to the Lord. We are not to be honoring paganism. We are to give glory to God and show him thanks. Paul points out that we are to welcome one another even though we may disagree about these practices. The only point I would like to make is the point of consistency. If one avoids a holiday like Halloween because of its pagan background, then one must also avoid Christmas and Easter. If one avoids one national holiday, be consistent and avoid all national holidays. If one avoids a personal memorial like a birthday, then avoid all of them like anniversaries and dates when our loved ones pass away. Be consistent, but know that the apostle Paul says it does not matter. It is God that you must be very concerned about. This is a two fold reminder. First, let God do his job as judge. On matters that are opinions or of a questionable nature, it is not for us to judge one another. Clearly we are not talking about sinful activities that are condemned in the scriptures. But there are things that do not put one another into sin that can be of a questionable nature. These are matters that are to be left up to God. Second, we must be very careful when we do choose to judge. We must make sure that they are matters of significant doctrinal import that would put one in a state of sin. Romans 14 demands of us to know and apply the scriptures well so that we know when judgments must be made and when things must be left up to God. Third, our acceptance or rejection of one another does not matter in terms of our standing before God. You might be in right standing with this church but going to hell because of the way you live your life and lack of faith. You might be rejected by this church because of false information and be right with God (like the apostle Paul was in Acts 9). God will determine whether we stand or fall. Just because we are a member of this church does not mean that we should take our salvation lightly.

⁵⁷ It is assumed that the heretics forbade food and drink, and required the observance of holy days. These items appear at first to be aspects of Judaism, and one might suspect the same problem that plagued the Galatian churches—the attempt to bind the Law of Moses on Gentiles. (Ash)

seek to influence our beliefs, finances, and even the education of our youth.

- **Total moral relativism is not possible.** It's not even logically possible.
- **Moral relativism is not the end-all to all of our society's evils.** When one group is defended another is stepped on, that is just how things work out. Can the pie really ever be split evenly? Recently, our government floated the idea to force people with good credit to pay higher interest rate for mortgage loans to subsidize loans for people with bad credit. (Bernard).
- **Truth and compassion are in the same lane.** Thinkers can feel, and feelers can think. Many would have us pick between truth and compassion, or said in a different way, truth and love. Why can we not have both? It's common for individuals to assert that they are speaking their mind when they are actually being unkind. On the other hand, some people use compassion as a justification for withholding the truth. True love is speaking the truth with compassion. (Ephesians 4:15)
- **Just because someone shows compassion, doesn't necessarily mean they have the moral (relativist) high ground.**
 - There are certain moral truths that remain unchanged by society. Regardless of how frequently people use the phrase "Who are you to judge?", God's words cannot be modified by any human. (Matthew 24:35; Hebrews 13:8; Malachi 3:6; Isaiah 5:20)
 - Left to our own devices, man will worship self and eventually destroy humanity (Matthew 24:37-39; Genesis 6:6ff; 19)
 - Jesus teaches us both compassion and truth.
 - For example, in John 8:10-11 the woman caught in adultery is confronted by Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "I do not **condemn you**, either. **Go. From now on sin no more.**" ⁵⁸ The Lord did not excuse her adultery. This is evident when He said, "stop living in sin." He forgave her as evidenced by His words, "neither do I condemn you." She was a forgiven woman and needed to hear the truth of not continuing in sin. That is truth and compassion.
 - "Loves does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices in truth." (1 Corinthians 13:6)



What are we to do?:

⁵⁸ Does this mean that Jesus the Judge is winking at a serious sin, marital infidelity? Not at all. To "not be condemned" does not mean there is no guilt. In this case, it means the woman is indeed guilty, but has been forgiven. Jesus reminds the woman of this fact by his final words: **leave your life of sin**, perhaps more accurately translated, "sin no longer," or even, "quit sinning." Jesus has not rescued her so that she could be more careful and not get caught the next time she engaged in illicit sex. He is asking for her to demonstrate a heart of repentance, for repentance and forgiveness always go hand in hand in the Bible. (Bryant and Krause)

- **There are no total moral relativists:** In the event that someone claims to be one, it may be worthwhile to ask them how they would react if someone hacked into their bank account and stole all their money. Would they still maintain their belief that the act is justifiable, or would they feel violated and seek justice?
- **Acknowledge that there are consequences for disobeying moral laws:** Romans 1:17ff is a section of scripture that explains what happens to society when men fail to respect moral laws. Everyone needs to accept and live by the truth there are consequences for lying, adultery, stealing, homosexuality, social drinking, murder, etc.
- **Be fair and honest when it comes to Christian liberties.** Allow people their freedoms and do not impose on them a heavier burden like the Pharisees did on the religious community of their day. (Romans 14; Matthew 23:4). By the same token, Christian liberties do not mean there are no absolutes, as mentioned above.
- **Deflating “That’s True for You, But Not for Me”** ⁵⁹
 - If my belief is only true for *me*, why isn’t your belief only true for *you*? Aren’t you saying you want me to believe the same thing you do?
 - You say no belief is true for everyone, but you want everyone to believe what you do. You’re making universal claims that relativism is *true* and absolutism is *false*.
 - You can’t in the same breath say, “Nothing is universally true” *and* “My view is universally true.” Relativism falsifies itself. It claims there is *one* position that is true—*relativism!*
 - You’re applying your view to everyone but yourself. You expect others to believe *your* views (the “self-excepting fallacy”).

Final thoughts:

- How do we arrive at objective truth, especially regarding moral issues? Historians Will and Ariel Durant wrote in their book *The History of Civilization* (1976) that no society has successfully maintained moral life without the aid of religion. They point to the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments, as an example of a religious contribution to formulating an objective moral code. The 10 Commandments prohibit murder, adultery, bearing false testimony, and stealing. (Durant) Imagine a society that strictly followed God’s moral code?
- “When truth dies, all of its subspecies, such as ethics, perish with it. If truth can’t be known, then the concept of moral truth becomes incoherent. Ethics becomes relative, right and wrong matters of individual opinion. This may seem a moral liberty, but it ultimately rings hollow. “The freedom of our day,” lamented a graduate in a Harvard commencement address, “is the freedom to devote

⁵⁹ (Copan)

ourselves to any values we please, on the mere condition that we do not believe them to be true." (Beckwith and Koukl)



Definitions & Concepts

① Moral relativism

② Imago dei

③ Relative

④ Absolute

⑤ Morality

⑥ Metaphysics

⑦ Truth

⑧ Self-worship

We all know it is good to do the right thing and bad to do the wrong thing - right?

"Morality directs people to behave in certain ways and avoid behaving in other ways. It evaluates behavior as right or wrong and may involve measuring the conformity of a person's actions to a code of conduct or set of principles.

Morality is "normative," it is concerned with how people should behave, not just how they actually do behave." (MU School of Medicine)

We talked about linguistic theft before. This is where words are redefined to fit an agenda. Below is a list of beliefs that are accepted to be "good" yet it's just not enough for society, so there is the "NEXT RIGHT THING."

"Current Belief"	"Next Right Thing"
It's bad to have a child when you are not ready to have one.	Example: An acceptable form of birth control is abortion. After all, it is my body and my right to choose.
I deserve happiness and to feel good about myself.	
Everyone has a right to their feelings.	
All beliefs can be equally true, depending on the person.	
Feelings, emotions, and our surroundings determine morality.	

MORAL RELATIVISM

Apologetics - Morality

Explain why it is good or not for individuals to make up their own rules.

Explain how moral relativism and tolerance conflict with each other.

Emotions are now the main arbiters of moral truths. How have emotions determined what is right and wrong in current society?

Is Scripture the only source of true morality? Why or why not?

What is truth in love?

Explain absolute truth and where one can find it.

Is there anything good about Moral Relativism? (Be fair and specific)

MORAL RELATIVISM

Apologetics - Morality

What are some reasons moral relativism is attractive to some people?

How would you explain moral relativism to your friend?

Where do you see moral relativism most prevalent?

Consider Acts 15:19-20. Does the Bible allow for differences in culture? Is this moral or cultural relativism? Why or why not? (cf. Rom. 10:12)

- Murder is always wrong, in any culture

What are some lies promoted by moral relativism?

Explain how these Scriptures speak to moral relativism:

- Proverbs 16:25
- Judges 17:6
- Judges 21:25
- Proverbs 3:13
- Hebrews 5:12-14
- Hebrews 4:12
- Proverbs 14:12
- Romans 1:18-25
- 1 Peter 1:24-25

Chapter 9 - Emotionalism: Replacing Logic with Emotions. What Could Go Wrong?



(Before you study the lesson read the questions and answer questions 1-3)

Postmodernism comes with its own dictionary of interesting words and concepts. One almost has to learn a new language in order to understand postmodernism. Note the following lengthy quote from a Men's Health article:

“The word “woke” has been weaponised. Look at almost any headline on the matter and you'll find it used as an insult, another sign that this country has lost its stiff upper lip and is headed straight for the dogs. And the targets are indiscriminate.

In recent months, the media has labelled the following things as woke: the Oscars, private schools, corporations, the BBC, the concept of social distancing, Disney World, children, the Church of England and a video game called CyberPunk 2077.

In reality, “woke” just means that you're alert to injustice. It means that you've opened your eyes and noticed the world around you. In most sentences, you could easily substitute it with the word “compassionate”. And being compassionate benefits you as much as others.



Research suggests that a kinder, more considered lifestyle is linked to decreased depression, reduced stress, lower blood pressure and better recovery from illness. According to a study by the University of Michigan, it can even make you live longer.

Plus, both men and women state that kindness makes a person more attractive. So, there's that.

But there's one problem. To be woke is to understand a dictionary's worth of jargon that couldn't seem anymore impenetrable. (Heritage)

Postmodern words one should probably learn:

- Cancel Culture - a phrase contemporary to the late 2010s and early 2020s used to refer to a culture in which those who are deemed to have acted or spoken in an unacceptable manner are ostracized, boycotted or shunned. (Bromwich)
- Cis - of, relating to, or being a person whose gender identity corresponds with the sex the person had or was identified as having at birth. (Merriam-Webster)
- Cultural Appropriation- “the inappropriate or unacknowledged adoption of an element or elements of one culture or identity by members of another culture or identity.” (The Editors of Encyclopedia)

Some people use the word "woke" as if it's supposed to be an insult.

But mostly they use it because they can't spell "empathetic," "educated," or "enlightened."

Britannica)

- Trigger warning – statement cautioning that content (as in a text, video, or class) may be disturbing or upsetting (Merriam-Webster).^{60 61}

There are too many words to list. A Google search will give you many results. You will be impressed, well, maybe not.^{62 63}



Emotions and logic:

During my time teaching Special Education, I worked with students who faced challenges with verbal communication and expressing their emotions. Unfortunately, many of them lacked the skills to communicate their feelings effectively, which often led to outbursts of frustration, violent behavior, and tears. There were **triggers** that set off my students. We had to figure out what those were, look for ways to help them **cope** with the **triggers**, and teach them how to identify their **emotions**.

- **Triggers:** One particular student had several triggers. Clicking noises drove him over the edge. Anything that clicked – lips smacking, snapping fingers, popping of balloons, clapping of hands, etc., would set him off.
- **Emotional outburst (s):** Upon hearing such noises, he would search for their origin, physically assault the individual responsible, and subsequently trigger a fire alarm. The harm that a 16-year-old, 6'3" and 250-pound young man can cause with his fists is unimaginable. Furthermore, it is quite inconvenient to evacuate a school building of 750 students and have fire/rescue every time there was a pop or snap!
- **Cope:** The student needed to find a healthy way to manage their emotions without causing disruption to others. Unfortunately, this concept is often misunderstood. Instead of expecting others to cater to our emotions, it's important to learn how to manage them and cope with them in a healthy and productive manner.

With this particular student we helped him by providing noise-canceling head-phones during crowded events. He also used stress beads and spinners to ease his anxiety. With the aid of therapy he learned how to use sign-language to communicate his emotions and needs. And the “cherry” on top! – He carried his own portable fire alarm. None of these coping skills (except sign language) were permanent. They were used only until he learned to control his emotions and use LOGIC to CONTROL his actions! This is what many in our

⁶⁰ Colleges across the country this spring have been wrestling with student requests for what are known as “trigger warnings,” explicit alerts that the material they are about to read or see in a classroom might upset them or, as some students assert, cause symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder in victims of rape or in war veterans. (Jennifer Medina, The New York Times, 17 May 2014)

⁶¹ Trigger warnings arose out of the psychological concept of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder “triggers”—experiences or events that cause a trauma survivor to re-experience an incident, go into avoidance mode, or “numb out.” While the theory evolved in the wake of the Vietnam War, the use of “trigger warnings” is very much a result of the feminist Internet, and the atmosphere of the 21st-century political climate. (Sarah Seltzer, Flavorwire, 27 May 2015)

⁶² Gen Z Woke Words: <https://bit.ly/43Kjll>

⁶³ 25 Examples of Woke: Left vs. Right: <https://bit.ly/46jXyej>

day do not want to accept; thinking and logic control our emotions. Our actions are not solely determined by our emotions.



It is important to acknowledge that emotional and mental health problems are real and should not be disregarded with phrases like "pull yourself up by the bootstraps" or "toughen up." Seeking help from a medical health professional is crucial for any mental and emotional health concerns.

How do People Usually Make Decisions?:

When it comes to decision-making, many people prefer to think of themselves as logical rather than emotional. Take a trip down memory lane to when you were a lot younger, say your teenage years. How logical was your decision-making then? One would hope that with a good academic study at the University of Hard-Knocks we have learned to use logic more often than not, but that is probably a far stretch. Even God did not want His children to eat crow (Leviticus 11).⁶⁴

According to Arthur Lefford, who wrote "The Influence of Emotional Subject Matter on Logical Reading," people tend to think that their beliefs and decisions are based on objective facts. But research shows that when someone agrees with a message, they see it as logical and rational. On the other hand, if they disagree with the message, they view it as an emotional appeal. On April 5th, 2023, there was a debate between Matt Walsh and a transgender EMT regarding biology. The EMT's argument was centered around the statement, "Truth Matters," and that any individual could identify as a woman if they so choose. During the debate, Walsh presented a hypothetical scenario to the EMT. He asked what the EMT would do if a biological male called for an ambulance claiming to be having a miscarriage. The EMT was unable to provide an answer and walked away. This scenario highlights the importance of relying on logic rather than emotions when making decisions, as the truth matters above all else.

Emotionalism has left reality completely out of the equation.

- **Hell:** What happens when hell makes people feel uncomfortable? Mainstream pastors turn it into a metaphor. "Whenever you hear people playing interpretive games with Scripture, arguing about "trajectories" and the like, you can be pretty sure that someone is trying to make the Christian faith align with their self-inspired sentimentalism." (The Christian Chronicle)
- **DNA and Biology no longer determine gender:** "The research and medical community now sees sex as more complex than male and female, and gender as

⁶⁴ One states that it originated towards the end of the war of 1812. An American soldier crossed enemy lines to hunt. He accidentally shot a crow. He was caught by a British soldier and forced to take a bite of the crow. Upon regaining possession of his gun, he then forced the British soldier to take a bite too. Source: theidioms.com

a spectrum that includes transgender people and those who identify as neither male nor female.” (Nature.com Editors)

Emotionalism, Reality, Logic, and Critical Thinking (lack thereof) in Religion:

We must be careful not to eliminate emotions from reality, logic and critical thinking - none are mutually exclusive. The danger is to rely only on one while excluding the other. For example, Jesus’ sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) perfectly illustrates all four:

- **reality:** poor in spirit - everyone in the audience needed a Savior
- **blessed:** emotion - while it is a reality, there is the amazing feeling of emotion that is connected with that fact
- **logic and critical thinking:** what did the people in Jesus’ audience need to do to be blessed with salvation? They needed to be poor in spirit. It took logic and critical thinking on their part to understand this truth.

When people left Jesus’ sermon, they were challenged with emotions and critical thinking, but more importantly, they were faced with the reality to change.

If you have ever been to a **charismatic** worship church service, you may have witnessed what religious emotionalism minus critical thinking is all about. There is a lot of yelling, clapping, loud music, head and neck jerking, rolling on the floor, pew jumping, running around the auditorium, being “slayed” in the spirit, and more!

Many **mega-church** services share a mentality of taking a verse out of context to support any claim. They often include flashy displays like light shows, concert-style music, and smoke machines. The pastors, often in their mid-40s, adopt a GEN-Z style and deliver woke sermons to celebrity-studded audiences. The stadium seating and emotional messages may leave attendees feeling empty.

The adherence to **conservative Christianity** exhibits similar traits. Commitment to tradition can sometimes hinder individuals from engaging in logical and critical reasoning. It's important to not blindly follow traditional practices as truth without considering the context of the scriptures. Doing so can lead to falsehoods, even if they seem valid at first glance.

Assumptions of Emotionalism:

- **I cannot control my emotions:** If one means by this, "I cannot control my feelings," then that is true and not an assumption. According to Dr. Diana Raab, emotions are a genuine reflection of our personal truth, which may not always align with factual events. Even if two individuals undergo the same experience, they can have differing viewpoints. It is important to understand that emotions cannot be classified as facts or truths, and we must acknowledge this reality. (Raab) What we can control is how we react to our passions vis-à-vis emotions. Imagine our world leaders not being able to control their emotions on the world stage! There is a clinical diagnosis for people who cannot control their emotions - OCD and bipolar.
- It is not **necessarily wrong to experience negative emotions**. **In fact**, emotions, whether positive or negative, are a natural part of the human experience. It's how we respond to these emotions that can be either right or wrong. Emotions can be compared to pain in this regard, as both serve as warning signals of potential danger or that something isn't quite right. If we eliminate negative emotions from our lives, it may give our children the impression that they can live in a fantasy world as carefree unicorns, taking breaks from reality whenever they feel overwhelmed. and that they can be the next NBA-NFL-NASCAR-NASA star, and Astronaut, (without being challenged) if they want to be! One potential reason for children losing the understanding of competition is the belief that it generates negative emotions. However, the solution of declaring everyone a winner fails to prepare individuals for the challenges of real life, which include obstacles and disappointment. It is better to learn about these realities with the support of family than without it.
- In today's society, there is a societal expectation to acknowledge and respect individuals' emotions and feelings. More directly, there is an expectation to kowtow and not speak against those feelings and emotions, or else one may be labeled as a bigot! **So, when emotions take over logic, we eliminate reality - and this makes no sense at all!**

Retail stores such as Target and Macy's have been at the forefront of creating safe spaces for members of the LGBTQIA+ community.⁶⁵ In the following years, inclusivity and respect for all genders and individuals became a priority in public schools, public venues, airports, and on US

⁶⁵ LGBTQIA+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, [transgender](#), queer (or sometimes questioning), intersex, asexual, and others. The "plus" represents other sexual identities, including pansexual and Two-Spirit. The first four letters of the acronym have been used since the 1990s, but in recent years there has been an increased awareness of the need to be inclusive of other sexual identities to offer better representation. The acronym is used to represent a diverse range of sexualities and gender-identities, referring to anyone who is transgender and/or same/similar gender attracted.

passports. Pride Month has been recognized by the White House and by every US president since Bill Clinton, except for George W. Bush, in some way. (Editors - Pride Month)

President Joe Biden officially declared June as Pride Month. In a speech from the White House celebrating Pride Month, President Joe Biden remarked: [as a high school boy] “And I was getting out of the car to go into the – in the city hall. And there were these two well-dressed men standing on a corner. The light changed. They kissed each other and went in different directions. One went to the DuPont Building; one went to the Hercules building [sic]. And I had never seen that before. I looked at my dad. He looked back at me. He said, “It’s simple. They love each other. It’s simple.” (Applause.) And to me, it’s that simple. It’s that straightforward... And to all – to all of you: Happy Pride Month. (Applause.) Happy Pride year. Happy Pride life. (Applause.)” (The White House - Joseph Biden Speech) ⁶⁶

Some public schools have **debated** whether boys and girls should use the same restrooms and athletic dressing rooms. ⁶⁷ How did they solve the debate? The school board “eliminated” the reality of two genders and made it so that anyone who “identified” as a female or male, or non-gender (whatever that may mean) had the freedom to use any restroom they desired.

How we are Fed the Emotionalism :

- **Trigger Words and warnings:** Certain universities provide instructional materials to students regarding the words that should be avoided while writing

Why is it important to respect someone's pronouns?: You can never tell what someone's pronouns are just by looking at them. The resource center says the best way to show respect for someone's gender identity is by asking and using their correct identity. Using someone's incorrect pronoun might make them feel disrespected, invalidated, dismissed, alienated, or dysphoric (often all of the above).

What are commonly used pronouns?: The most common pronouns are she/her/hers and he/him/his, but there are some gender-neutral pronouns that are commonly used. Common gender-neutral pronouns include the following

They/them/theirs (Shea ate their food because they were hungry.) This is a pretty common gender-neutral pronoun and it can be used in the singular.

Ze/hir/hir (Tyler ate hir food because ze was hungry.) Ze is pronounced like “zee” can also be spelled zie or xe, and replaces she/he/they. Hir is pronounced like “here” and replaces her/hers/him/his/they/theirs.

Just my name please! (Ash ate Ash's food because Ash was hungry) Some people prefer not to use pronouns at all, using their name as a pronoun instead.

Note: you should never refer to someone an 'it' or 'he-she' as those are offensive slurs. (WKBW)

⁶⁶ President Biden continued to point out his accomplishments in the number of high level men and women appointments in his cabinet and military who are part of the LGBTQetc community. He ends the speech by accentuating how much he has accomplished in the federal arena and that he has just begun! <https://bit.ly/46ha0YH>

⁶⁷ List of schools that have gender neutral restrooms (<https://bit.ly/447WCHN>)

assignments or communicating with their peers. Gender-neutral pronouns, in particular, are being pushed by major progressive universities and large corporations. All in the name of inclusivity and being non-offensive. You may have seen some people in the service industry wearing name tags that read: Hello, my name is "Bobby My Pronouns are They, Them, He, Him, Ze." The following is a guide from the UW-Milwaukee LGBT Resource Center and GLSEN that explains why it is important we should learn and respect the proper use of gender-neutral/inclusive pronouns.

It is disheartening that this irrationality has been packaged, sold, and embraced by nations. According to Jeremiah 17:9, it is not advisable for humans to follow their hearts as they can be deceitful. If not trained by God's Word, it can lead to the destruction of our society. Paul points this out in Romans 1:17ff.

We are raising an eggshell-walking generation that has to mind the small words that are spoken because they may trigger and set someone off yet never mind the foul smut that is spoken everywhere and should be offensive.

- **Follow your heart:** It has been acknowledged that relying solely on the heart for decision-making is not always reliable. This is because the heart is the emotional, right-brain, and illogical aspect of decision-making. However, when emotional thinking is combined with logical thinking, the resulting outcome is likely to be more favorable.
- **I'm offended:** Emotions and feelings are the emotions guiding the majority of our discussions at many levels. During a Senate hearing on plastics manufacturing and pollution, Senator Mullins posed a question to one of the experts about their stance on plastic production. Her response was, "In my dream world I would end all plastics." (C-Span) Dreams and not facts, emotions and not logic are what some experts are using as expert testimony during senate hearings! Why? Because shallow people who are guided mostly by their emotions are easily offended (If you are easily offended, your are easily manipulated). The **WRONG** solution? Everyone else must kowtow to the easily offended. This is why many businesses in America have decided not to use Christmas trees and eliminated "Merry Christmas" from their signage. This is also the reason why Christianity is being persecuted in the Western World yet other religions are being protected. ⁶⁸



What Do We Do With Our Emotions?

Emotions are not to be discounted. Our emotions are innate signals that God has embedded within us to alert us when things are amiss or when things are going exceptionally well.

⁶⁸ Hypocritically, many progressives attack Christianity for being homophobic, misogynistic, and backwards when it comes to evolution, but at the same time defend Muslims. (Read this interesting article: <https://bit.ly/3NdVh1N> - "As a lifelong feminist, and firmly on the political Left, I am appalled at so-called progressives that capitulate to Islamist men, and make an exception for Islam as a religion - when being (rightly) critical of Judaism and Catholicism. What is behind this hypocrisy? From where I am standing it is simple: the fear of being labelled 'Islamophobic'.")

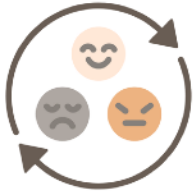
- **It is crucial not to dismiss or disregard our emotions.** Like a warning light on a dashboard, it is unwise to cover it up with tape and overlook the cautionary signal. We must take heed of these emotions, or else they may escalate into an issue. Taking time to recognize and deal with our emotions takes time and effort. Not doing anything about it will eventually wear us down and cause great damage. The key is to learn how to react to our emotions.
- **Experiencing emotions is a natural part of being human, but it's important to never harm others as a result of our feelings.** To say it in a modern way, "It is ok to have feelings." We are made in the image of God. God has emotions. Paul says the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and **self-control**. (Galatians 5:22-23).
- **You are in control of your emotions:** God calls this self-control. 2 Corinthians 10:5 says we are to take captive every thought and, in Romans 12:2 we are instructed to renew our minds. These two verses make it clear that we can control our emotions.

Final Thoughts:

Feelings are an inherent part of being human and can range from one extreme to another. Our Savior, too, experienced intense emotions during His time on Earth. At the start of His ministry, He was distressed and angered by the callousness of the people (Mark 3:5ff). When His dear friend Lazarus passed away, Jesus was deeply moved and shed tears (John 11:33). Additionally, He was so furious that He turned over tables in the temple (John 2:13-22). God was motivated by love to send His Son to die on the cross, providing a pathway to heaven for humanity. (John 3:16) In every case our Lord did not allow His emotions to take over His thinking. Emotions are a part of the human mind.

It's important to keep emotional thinking in check and not let it override common sense. While it's natural to have emotions, it's crucial that they don't negatively impact others or impose personal standards on them. It's okay to seek a safe space to process emotions, but it's unfair to expect everyone else to constantly tread lightly around us and censor their words to avoid triggering us.

Chapter 9: Emotionalism: Replacing Logic with Emotions. What Could Go Wrong?



Pre Reading

1. After reading the chapter headings, what are some questions you would like answered?

2. As you browse through the chapter, which words catch your attention? What is your interpretation of their meaning?

3. What is your personal view on emotional thinking prior to delving into the subject matter?

4. What do you think a "safe place" is?

5. As you read the chapter, highlight what you find important to you. Write down the three most important points.



Chapter 9: Emotionalism: Replacing Logic with Emotions. What Could Go Wrong?



	How do you define it?	How does the dictionary define it?
Reason		
Reality		
Judgment		
Emotion		
Passion		
Logic		
Critical thinking		
Trigger words		
Self-control		
Offend		

Chapter 9: Emotionalism: Replacing Logic with Emotions. What Could Go Wrong?



Scenario:

A group of people have gathered to watch college football on a Saturday afternoon. The teams playing are fierce rivals, causing **emotions** and **passions** to run high. As the game progresses, plays are made, calls are made, and the score remains close. The spectators become increasingly loud, with some directing their shouts towards the referee and others towards the players. Despite the chaos, it is a thrilling and closely contested match.

Activity 1 - Emotions vs. Passions

Warning: REMAIN CALM - Discuss the scenario with the class group. In the box below, write down thoughts about your experience in highly emotional and passionate scenarios like the one described above. Secondly, discuss the difference between **emotions** and **passions**. Is there a difference? If so, what are the differences? Thirdly, do emotions cloud our thinking? If so, how? Do passions cloud our thinking? If so, how?

Chapter 9: Emotionalism: Replacing Logic with Emotions. What Could Go Wrong?



Scenario: *Definition: Members of "generation snowflake" are easily offended, triggered by microaggressions, and concerned with what may or may not be politically correct.*

A person complains she is offended by the number of churches in a small rural town she lives in. "There are not enough secular humanist organizations in our community." She begins an online petition to start "The Humanists of Connersville Township." To the surprise of the conservative townspeople, the petition garners hundreds of interested people. Quickly, many concerned Christians begin to protest and express their anger and distrust toward this activist. They call her names (snowflake, millennial, GEN Z, atheist, devil worshipper), bully her online and give her a hard way to go.

Activity 2 - Emotions - How We React

Discuss the scenario with the class. The person in the scenario decided to gauge the town's interest in humanism. She found there was a large group that was possibly interested in either learning more about or forming a humanist group. The conservative religious people chose to react in a certain way. In the box below, write what emotions you can identify (i.e., fear, anger, etc.), who reacted off of emotions, and how the situation could have been handled better. The point is, many times, our righteousness tells us we are "reacting" (Jer. 17:9) righteously, but how we accomplish the goal may be the wrong way.

Activity 4 - Your Turn

Share a personal experience where you "Followed your heart" and made a regrettable decision? It's okay to be candid - we all have our fair share of such stories.



Follow
- your -
Heart

Activity 5 - Your Turn

Why did you become a Christian? How many of your reasons fall under the factual category and how many fall under the emotional category? If your primary reasons for being a Christian are emotional, have you considered how the enemy might try to disrupt your faith? What are some ways that you can integrate factual reasons for belief into the mix? Emotions can change, facts don't. How might incorporating unchanging facts make your faith stronger, especially in light of Hebrews 11:1?

Emotional Reasons	Factual Reasons

Activity 6 - Questions

- How are emotions like a compass?

- How might a person who has been influenced by postmodern thinking be vulnerable to the consequences of emotionalism?

- How does emotionalism affect our understanding of the Bible? Especially in areas of morality and discipline?

- Explain what you understand by these phrases:
Trigger warnings -

Follow your heart

I'm offended

- What is the difference between TRUTH and a TRUTH CLAIM?

Activity 6 - Questions

- How can you help your children fulfill 2 Corinthians 10:5? How can you fulfill the same passage?
- How can you exercise control over your emotions?
- How does emotionalism affect our understanding of the Bible? Especially in areas of morality and discipline?
- Explain the following verses in their context:

Jeremiah 17:9:

Romans 12:2

Luke 10:27

2 Corinthians 10:5

Religious Pluralism Vocabulary

Religious pluralism generally refers to the belief in two or more religious worldviews as being equally valid or acceptable. More than mere tolerance, religious pluralism accepts multiple paths to God or gods as a possibility and is usually contrasted with "exclusivism," the idea that there is only one true religion or way to know God. Religious pluralism can be defined as "respecting the otherness of others".

History

While religious pluralism has been in existence since at least the seventeenth century, the concept has become more popular since the latter half of the twentieth century in Western Europe and North America. Specifically, the idea of religious ecumenism (religions working together as one) and the recently popularized interfaith movement have led to the increased acceptance of religious pluralism in popular culture.

Multiple Paths to God

Pluralism is more than the sharing of certain values or agreement on some social issues. Buddhists and Christians both agree that helping the poor is important, but such limited concord is not pluralism. Pluralism has to do with lending credence to competing truth claims and accepting diverse beliefs regarding God and salvation.

Exclusivist Religions

Exclusivist religions teach that theirs is the only way to salvation and to religious truth, and some of them would even argue that it is necessary to suppress the falsehoods taught by other religions.

Relativism & Inclusivism

Relativism, the belief that all religions are equal in their value and that none of the religions give access to absolute truth, is an extreme form of inclusivism.

Inter-religious & Syncretism

The attempt to take over creeds or practices from other religions or even to blend practices or creeds from different religions into one new faith is an extreme form of inter-religious dialogue.

Ecumenism

The concept and principle that Christians who belong to different Christian denominations should work together to develop closer relationships among their churches and promote Christian unity.



Chapter 10: Pluralism - Believe in Something - a Tree, Mother Earth, Frog, Something!

Have you ever heard of the backyard game called horseshoes? It's also known as corn hole in some regions. The objective is to throw the horseshoe or bag into the hole to make a point. However, points can also be made if the horseshoe **almost** reaches the hole. What makes this game interesting is that a person can win without ever getting the horseshoe or bag in the hole but by simply getting close to the hole. Some people approach religion with a corn hole mentality - "I don't have to hit the target, as long as I get close enough."

In Acts 17, the apostle Paul toured the city of Athens while waiting for his companions to arrive. He shared the Gospel with Jews and Gentiles in the synagogue and marketplace. This caught the attention of some prominent Greeks and they summoned Paul to the official Areopagus⁶⁹ in order to "hear something new." (Acts 17:21). To the Greek ear, Paul's God was strange, yet it should not have been stranger than what they had been worshipping. From the article *12 Greek gods and goddesses*: "Cruel and fickle, passionate and vindictive, jealous and insecure, petty and insane: the inhabitants of Mount Olympus represent an attempt by the ancient Greeks to explain the chaos of the universe through human nature. Thus, like every deity invented before and since, these gods and goddesses are embodiments of human solipsism.⁷⁰ The stories of their battles, bickering, and sexual conquests have indelibly influenced

⁶⁹ Areopagus ('Ἀρειος Πάγος, *Areios Pagos*). Also called Mars' Hill. A hill in Athens where Paul conversed with the Athenian council about Christ (Acts 17:19, 22). A prominent feature in ancient Athens, it was here that Paul preached a sermon about the "unknown God" (Acts 17:22-31). (Barry et al.)

⁷⁰ the view or theory that the self is all that can be known to exist: solipsism is an idealist thesis because 'Only my mind exists' entails 'Only minds exist'. (dictionary.com)

the course of Western language and narrative.” (Pallardy) ⁷¹ But the God that Paul was preaching was “Unknown” to them. Why? Because Paul’s God was unique to any god:

- The True God is sought by man, even the most superstitious man (Acts 17:22)
- God is not hidden; therefore, He is **known** and can **easily be found** (Acts 17:23)
- God is the Creator of everything and every human (Acts 17:24-25)
- God guides the history of all men and nations (Acts 17:26)
- God has a great purpose for creating man: to seek and to know Him (Acts 17:27-28)
- God demands genuine repentance (Acts 17:29-30)
- God has appointed a day to judge the entire world (Acts 17:31)
- The True God demonstrated His love for His creation that He took the form of man, died on the cross, and rose on the third day in order to save man. (Acts 17)

However, to the Greek Epicurean and Stoic minds, the One True God confused them, but what made sense to them was believing in the love goddess **Aphrodite** (originated from Uranus), **Athena**, the goddess of wisdom, reason, and war (sprouted fully formed from Zeus’ forehead), **Artemis** the fleet-footed goddess of the hunt, **Ares** the god of blood lust (some think he had a fondness for dead puppies), **Apollo** the god who got his way by making up oracles, **Demeter** the goddess of agriculture (her daughter had an issue with Hades), **Dionysus** the god of intoxication, sex, and savage rituals (his father Zeus married a mortal woman, then accidentally killed her, and then sewed **Dionysus** into his thigh until he grew up), **Hades** the god and ruler of the world of the dead, **Hera** the goddess of Olympus (she was both sister to and wife of Zeus), **Hermes** the god of livestock, fertility, music, luck, and deception (all is fair in the world of pluralism - who are we to judge?), **Poseidon**, the god of the sea, earthquakes, and horses (he and Medusa fathered Pegasus and Cyclops), **Zeus**, the main god who became a god by killing his father, Cronos, with the help of Hades (talk about making a deal with the devil) and Poseidon (his weakness was that he could not keep his hands off pretty mortal women)... and yet they refused to believe in Paul’s God!

It was understandable for them to consider Paul as someone who talked excessively - a babbler. They preferred having multiple beliefs, chaos, and diverse ways of worshiping different gods. This allowed them to justify their human interpretations and avoid acknowledging the existence of the One True Creator - especially not having accountability. “So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.” (Romans 14:12)

The unknown god attracts many people today: confusion, idolatry, animals, etc... and call it new age, spiritism, dualism, enamored with what is unknown and cannot be proven or evidenced. The idea that the panacea for all religious division and ills in the world is tolerance (a hijacked word) live and let live, or some other hippie saying, is nonsense. It was Jesus who said that He did not come to bring peace but the sword. (Matthew 10:34-36). Achieving peace with God involves accepting God’s terms, which may lead to conflicts with other people. This implies that individuals must align themselves with God’s will to attain true peace with Him.

⁷¹ Incredible read on the origin of the 12 “A” list of Greek gods and goddesses - <https://bit.ly/3XIL9SG>



E pluribus unum - Out of Many, One

The phrase's origin lies in the idea that a single nation emerged from the union of the original Thirteen Colonies. This phrase is prominently displayed on the scroll and clutched in the eagle's beak on the Great Seal of the United States. Religious groups have adopted this motto and applied it to religion to mean that there are many paths, whether religious or not, that lead to a god.⁷² What is shocking (it should not be shocking since we live in such degenerate times; 1 Kings 18:19-20 ⁷³) is that several "Christian" denominations promote pluralism.



Those who support religious pluralism hold the belief that God can be reached through all religions and denominations. They also believe that God has revealed **itself** in different geographical locations, through different entities and under different circumstances. According to them, while **diverse religions** and **denominations interpret the same Ultimate Reality differently, each interpretation is valid**. No single religion or denomination **can claim to own the truth**. Basically, **there are multiple paths to salvation**. A better world can be achieved through peaceful coexistence, mutual understanding, and respect for the differences among us.

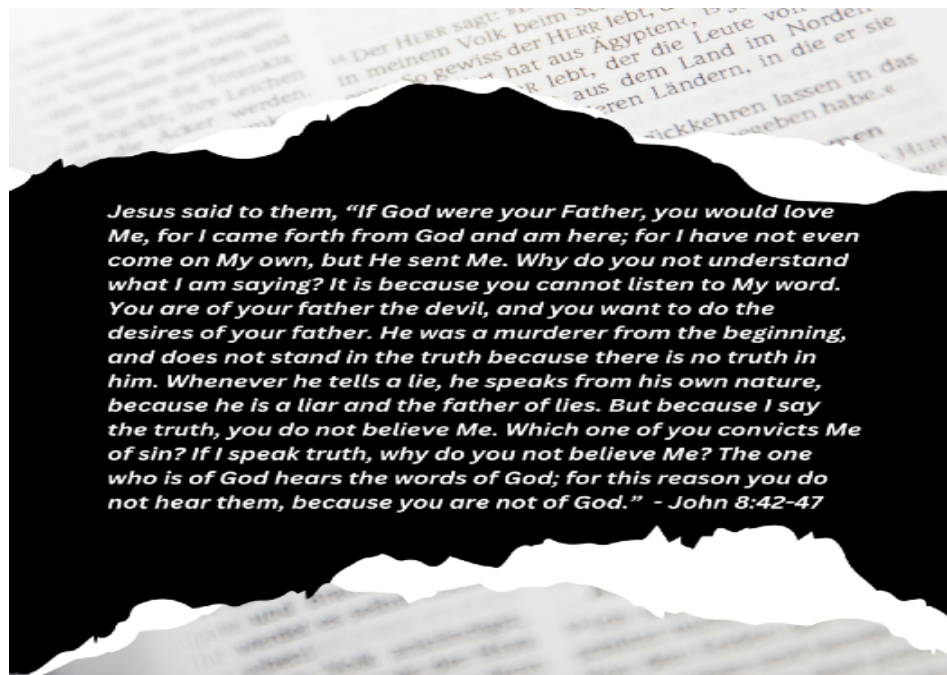
There can be no greater lie that man has invented than this. As Dr Lennox said in reference to a debate he had with Stephen Hawking, "Just because someone smart says something, it doesn't make it true. Smart people do say dumb things." (Burtwell). The Apostle Paul made it clear in Romans 1 that man became stupid in his own wisdom by worshipping the created instead of the Creator.

Isaiah 44 illustrates the stupidity of man in worshipping anything but the One True God in the One True Way. He points out how a blacksmith works over hot coals, hammering and shaping a piece of iron to the point of exhaustion and hunger. When he is done, he bows down and worships it. Isaiah's second illustration is that of a wood craftsman. He walks in the forest picking up sticks and cutting down trees. Traces plans on the block of wood, cuts and planes the figure. Places the idol in a temple and worships it. Isaiah concludes with this accusation; "Pretty stupid, wouldn't you say? Don't they have eyes in their heads? Are their brains working at all? Doesn't it occur to them to say, 'Half of this tree I used for firewood: I baked bread, roasted meat, and enjoyed a good meal. And now I've used the rest to make a repulsive idol. Here I am praying to a stick of wood!' This lover of emptiness, of nothing, is so out of touch with reality, so far gone, that he can't even look at what he's doing, can't even look at the idol stick of wood in his hand and say, 'This is crazy.'" (Isaiah 44:18-20 - MSG)

⁷² a "god" because religions like Hinduism believe in hundreds of deities, Baha'is share in the belief that there is not simply one path to God, affirming that not only is there more than one path, but indeed ALL the historic religions originated with an authentic revelation from God, with prophets who were equally exalted in their station.

⁷³ "Yet the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, "No, but there shall be a king over us, so that we also may be like all the nations, and our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles."

Why is pluralism needed? What's the purpose of "several paths" to the One God? It really boils down to doing things man's way and not God's way.



Don't think this is limited only to the alternative Eastern religions; this also includes denominationalism (more on that later). A group of respected religious leaders in the Reno, Nevada area were posed with the inquiry: Is the coexistence of multiple religions an advantage or a challenge?

Stephen R. Karcher, St. Anthony Greek Orthodox Church presiding priest said:

By our very descriptive title – "Orthodox," which means right belief – we completely reject "religious pluralism." But let me be clear that it's no problem living in a society that's pluralistic. We respect, appreciate and learn from our neighbors and the diverse religious traditions, as well as the vast variety of Christian denominations. However, Orthodox Christians believe in the "miracle of truth." In other words, we believe truth exists. We also believe we come to know truth by participating in and attending liturgical services at church and living a genuine and proper Orthodox Christian life. Just as our lifestyle has the potential to lead us either toward faith or unbelief, so too the way we do our faith and how we pray defines the quality of our spirituality. The real opportunity exists in experiencing divine grace and coming to know the truth that's genuine and liberating, that "makes us free."

Bradley S Corbin, Baha'i teacher



Baha'is embrace religious pluralism as an opportunity, for we share in the belief that there is not simply one path to God, affirming that not only is there more than one path, but indeed ALL the historic religions originated with an authentic revelation from God, with prophets who were equally exalted in their station. Baha'is see this "progressive revelation" as an organic process that had occurred from time immemorial and would continue eternally. This is a whole new way of thinking about religion. It is not just its own species of religion, but is a species, genus, family, order, phylum, and kingdom, incorporating all faiths into one faith. This pluralistic vision allows for a deep spiritual transformation and transcendence at both the personal and societal levels; a transformation that aims to lead the world into a new age of peace, oneness and human development.

Steve B. Bond, senior pastor of Summit Christian Church, Sparks ⁷⁴

Religious pluralism is both an opportunity and a problem. It can be an opportunity because when multiple religious beliefs coexist, it allows for a greater exchange of ideas and worldviews. It also enables people increased freedom to choose their personal faith because they are exposed to a variety of possibilities. Religious pluralism also prevents governmental leaders from becoming vassals for religious leaders; throughout history, religion has been a breeding ground for despotic totalitarianism.

However, religious pluralism can also be a problem. This is because not all religions are true and when pluralism runs amok it can lead some people to think that "all roads lead to the same god." But this is incorrect. The reality is some religions are based on historically verified facts – Jesus actually did rise from the grave after he was crucified. But many other religions are not based on verifiable facts like this.

Kenneth G. Lucey, UNR philosophy/religion professor

The existence of "religious diversity" is neither an opportunity nor a problem, in the sense that it is something to be either cultivated or avoided. Rather it is simply a fact. It is just part of the real world that a multitude of different religions exist. One doesn't either promote or attempt to avoid features of the world that are simply part of the fabric of reality. A billion Hindus believe that there are a multitude of gods and a like number of Buddhists deny there are any personal deities at all. This is just a feature of our world. An opportunity is something we anticipate because it is a possibility which we relish for its anticipated results. Religious diversity, on the other hand, is simply a given of the world we inhabit. It is not going to go away. Actually, it makes our world a far more interesting place.

⁷⁴ Note that this group has roots in the Restoration Movement.

Muhammed A. Quddus, Northern Nevada Muslim Community member

While monotheistic Islam is God's final version of religion for humankind, the Quran does refer to its peaceful coexistence with the other faiths. In verse 22:40, the Quran states: "Had God not repelled people by means of others, synagogues and churches, mosques and monastic cells, wherein God's name is remembered, would have been demolished." And contrary to widespread misconceptions, the Quran further asserts that "there be no compulsion in religion" (2:256) and "will you then compel mankind, against their will, to believe?" (10:99).

The most pronounced Quranic affirmation of religious pluralism is in surah 109 that emphatically declares: "Neither do I worship what you worship; nor do you worship what I worship ... To you shall be your religion and to me shall be my religion." Islam has lived in peace with other religions for thousands of years and will continue doing so, recent developments notwithstanding.

Monique Jacobs, director of faith formation, Roman Catholic Diocese of Reno

Catholics are monotheistic. We believe in one God. We profess this in our Creed every time we worship at Liturgy. We believe in one God for all people. This singular, generative God cannot possibly be understood by humanity in one way. Religious pluralism is a human attempt to name the interaction of many people, in many lands and creeds, trying to access the same God. Religious pluralism is an amazing gift. The spiritual journey invites maturity, deeper insights into how God is revealed; this requires detachment from our own ideas and openness to the creative ways that God will reach out to all. The faith practice which works for me becomes my preferred route to God ... which may not be yours. The loving, wise, mysterious work of God in the heart of each person and in their genuine, spiritual practices must be respected in order for God to be fully revealed.

WHAT?!

Matthew T. Fisher, Reno Buddhist Center resident priest

The Buddha came to his great insights in an axial age where many fundamental belief systems were forming. He lived and taught in a time when lively debate and interfaith dialogue was common. For the Buddhist worldview pluralism is not a problem. Buddha said there are 84,000 paths to enlightenment. All contribute to an understanding of how the universe operates.

We have always seen the world as a pluralistic realm. Different people at different stages of spiritual development and understanding follow different paths. We have always upheld views of tolerance and respect toward other faiths. People are at different spiritual and mental places and the various religions or worldviews are appropriate to them at each stage of becoming fully human. In the Kalama sutra, the Buddha encourages us to seek and question and experience our spiritual path ourselves. Without pluralism, this would not be possible. 🙏

Sharla S. Hales, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints area public affairs director

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe that almost all religions have some truth, a concept that is sometimes intended by the phrase "religious pluralism." We also believe in appreciating commonalities and promoting cooperation and understanding among different religions. With both of those meanings, we see opportunity.

However, Latter-day Saints do not accept the concept, sometimes intended by the phrase "religious pluralism," that two or more religions with mutually exclusive claims of truth are equally valid. To those who support the phrase in this and its related meanings, we claim no problem, but we respectfully disagree – hopefully without being disagreeable.

Brian E. Melendez, American Indian spirituality scholar

As a tribal spiritualist, I believe that religious pluralism is the progressive game-changer. Religious pluralism is not only timely and necessary, but the untethered voice of collective consciousness reaching far beyond religious and nonreligious demographic lines. If we could all step back from our intimate platforms and utilize a pragmatic lens, we might realize our beautiful similarities and purpose.



If every faith and practice focused on love, brotherhood and solidarity, instead of the usual fear, individualism and separation, the world could be a different place. As with any revolution, the old guard will resist, it's just their way. It's interesting that a concept to bring the world together for a common good can be transformed into a negative.

Why not ask God? Why not go to the Author and Creator of all things? One of the "Spiritual Leaders" said that there is truth in all religions, well from where does all truth emanate? (John 14:16) It would make sense to go to the source instead of places where some truth can be found sprinkled here and there. When one uses the interpretative lens what is being said is that convenient truth can be found in all religions - like a barfed-up buffet of spiritual nonsense. (Proverbs 26:11). The idea that all religions have some truth is an excuse for acceptance. Tolerance is one thing but acceptance is another. This is what progressives mean when they start using the word "tolerance." They mean to accept and even adopt their belief system as valid. Imagine saying this to God, "Be tolerant, accepting and adopt as valid my belief system, because in the end it has led to the great-god-person-being-thing-who/what item, ahem, you."

There is a reason why God is a jealous God. It is not because He is selfish and childish. It is because He is the Creator and not the author of confusion. (Genesis 1:1; 1 Corinthians 14:33). The One True God is love. True love corrects and provides truth that leads to salvation, not destruction. True love is truth always, even when it makes us uncomfortable. (1 John 4:7-21). The true God is not evolving and growing with time. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. These progressive religions take pride in that a person's spiritual path is ever evolving, "Buddha said there are 84,000 paths to enlightenment. All

contribute to an understanding of how the universe operates.” (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8; Numbers 23:19; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18). Jesus said there is One Way!

The United States of America:

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...” The U.S. Constitution allows us to worship any god we may choose. Whether that was the original intent or not is for constitutional scholars to debate. The fact remains that this opens the legal path for pluralism. Hence, the mantra “E pluribus unum - Out of Many, One” has been adopted by many pluralists. Out of many religions, one god. The U.S. has provided tax-exempt status to various groups claiming to be a religion. For example, the church of Scientology, The Church of Compassionate Service, the Satanic church, and even the First church of Cannabis in Indianapolis!⁷⁵

In democratic countries, people are free to practice their chosen religion. Religious freedom is a valuable right, especially for those who wish to worship the True God without fear of persecution. However, it is concerning that some progressive groups are attempting to silence Christians and limit their ability to practice their faith. (Gray). More and more, our religious freedoms will be truncated. Social media has already taken steps to censor freedom of speech in the name of curtailing hate speech, and they define what constitutes as hate speech.

What Will Happen?:

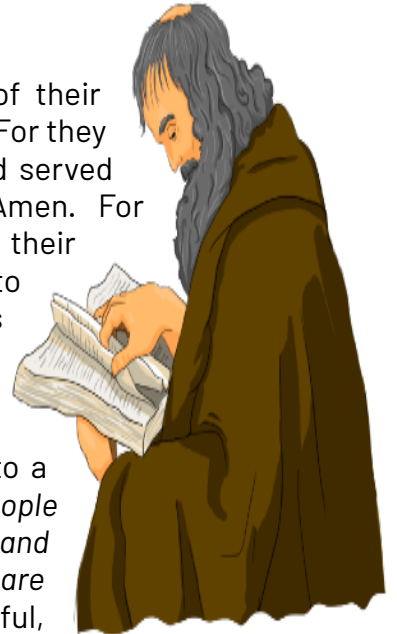
It is unlikely that alternative and progressive religions will disappear anytime soon. In fact, it is probable that more will emerge. As our confidence in our own abilities grows, our ability to reason will become increasingly ineffective, and our hearts will become more hardened. Despite considering ourselves wise, we will display our foolishness by disregarding evident truths and offering adoration to the earth, rocks, insects, and other created objects. This pattern will continue to the point where we, as a creation, will distance ourselves from God more and more. The further we move away from the True Light, the more depraved and disordered our society will become - leading to our own destruction. We are presently living in a state of mind similar to Nebuchadnezzar’s - “Look at what I have created. Look at what I have accomplished with my own hands.” Unfortunately, this mindset will not bode well for our society's future.

⁷⁵ <https://do317.com/p/first-church-of-cannabis>

This is how Paul concluded his thought on the matter:

Romans 1:24-32 -

"Therefore God gave them up to vile impurity in the lusts of their hearts, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for falsehood, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged natural relations for that which is contrary to nature, and likewise the men, too, abandoned natural relations with women and burned in their desire toward one another, males with males committing shameful acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a depraved mind, to do those things that are not proper, *people* having been filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, and evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice; *they are* gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unfeeling, and unmerciful; and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, **they** not only do the same, **but also approve of those who practice them.**"



Where Do We Stand?:

Society and progressivism tell us to be tolerant and accepting of pluralism. They mean by this to accept as a valid form of religion just as they would have us accept same-sex marriage as acceptable and normal. However, God commands us to love Him first and our neighbor as we love ourselves. (Mark 12:30-31)

- **Love the Lord Your God with your entire being (Mark 12:30)**

The foremost commandment is our relationship with God; it is upward (vertical relationship). It only makes sense since we are created in the image of God. One should note that the context of this Scripture is the Jewish understanding of the Shema (Deut. 6:4-5) and that of daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly sacrifices (Micah 6).

God's concern with the first and greatest commandment is that God should always come first and never be substituted or placed on an equal plane with

anything. HE ALWAYS COMES FIRST. (Exodus 20:5).⁷⁶ He has every right and reason to demand this from His creation - He is the Creator. In Exodus 20:4-5 God is jealous when mankind bows down and gives to others what belongs to Him, namely, worship.

- **Love your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:31)**

The Scribe in Mark 12:30 did not ask Jesus about the second greatest command, yet Jesus went ahead and explained it to him because the first command does not exist without the second, and vice versa. Note the importance. If I say I love God but do not love my neighbor, then I am a liar. (1 John 4:20). My neighbor (anyone made in the image of God!) deserves to be loved by me to the degree that I love myself.

How do I demonstrate this love? By not mistreating my neighbors no matter what their religious beliefs may be. In fact, we should follow Paul's example in Athens by sharing the Gospel with the Stoics and Epicureans, demonstrating our love for them, and attempting to bring them to Christ. This is a tremendous act of love.

- **Never agree with falsehood. (Ephesians 5:10-11)**

"Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret."

It is very tempting to say positive things about our friends' religions. Things like, "There are good points in every religion." While we may think this is a way to "bring all people" together it does no justice and it is robbing glory from God. Either false religion is completely false or it is not false. A little bit of strychnine is bad or it is not. We cannot accept other forms of worship as valid paths to God. There is only one way to God and that is through Jesus (John 14). Our pluralistic society promotes the idea that we should all COEXIST or else we will COEXTINCT.



We cannot remain silent. God's people are to be a shining light and we must not hide under a tree or in a cave. (Matthew 5:15-16; 1 Kings 19; Hosea 4:6). We should speak up - yes speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15) - but speak up we must! After all, we are in the Lord's army and as His soldiers we must be ready for the defense (1 Peter 3:15-20). It is a sin to not do what is right (James 4:15). There are many examples in the Bible of men and women who risked their lives by doing what was right - taking a stand for God and His Name. (Hebrews 11).

⁷⁶ "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God..." Notice that God is jealous when someone gives to another something that rightly belongs to Him.

Lies the Devil Wants You to Believe:

If we were talking about politics, one could take any position, and it would not matter; really, it wouldn't. Jesus spoke to both Pharisees and Publicans (👤). However, religion is completely different. This has eternal consequences for everyone involved. A GOOGLE search on "What are the positives of religious pluralism" returned a slew of crazy results. Here are some results that claim to be "beneficial" to society. Berger ("The Good of Religious Pluralism | Peter L. Berger"):



- **Sincerity makes a thing true - "I sincerely believe."** Here we go again with feelings and beliefs. Remember the pro-abortion witness speaking in front of the House Judiciary Committee when she told members of Congress that she believes men can get pregnant? (Arrambide). Just because someone sincerely believes something does not make it so. As a child, I sincerely believed there was a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. I walked for hours until a policeman found me and returned me to my parents - without a pot of gold! The True God of heaven does not call on us to have sincere faith without providing us with evidence.

When it comes to the shape of a circle, there is a clear definition that cannot be disputed. If one person claims it is round and another claims it is a triangle, both cannot be correct no matter how genuine their beliefs may be. This is because a circle cannot possess both round and triangular properties simultaneously, as it goes against logical reasoning.⁷⁷

The same is true when it comes to philosophy and religion. When it comes to different beliefs about spirituality, there can be conflicting opinions. For example, while I may believe in One True God, others may argue that there are hundreds of paths to enlightenment or many denominations that lead to God. However, it is important to note that not everyone can be right. Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me." (John 14:6). It is clear that Jesus believed he was the only way to reach God, and not just one of many options.

It is possible for us to peacefully coexist with individuals who hold contrasting beliefs, as long as they acknowledge and respect our fundamental disagreement with their belief system. We acknowledge their sincerity, but it does not necessarily make their belief true. We are not doubting their sincerity, but rather examining the validity of their beliefs. God will always be True and that will never change. Our knee should never bow to Baal. (1 Kings 19:18; Romans 11:4). If there were no differences we would not be called upon to be tolerant.

- **It does not matter what (who) you worship, as long as you worship something.** All humans are created to worship something, at the very least self (the least of

⁷⁷ the **law of noncontradiction**, which states that contradictory propositions cannot both be true at the same time and in the same sense.

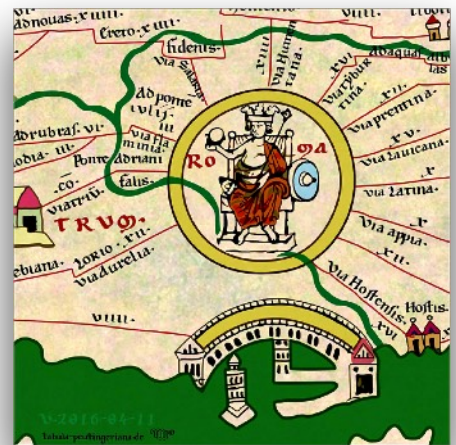
which is self!). We all worship something in some manner, whether it be clothes, money, children, career, food, sports, activity, deity...something is our idol god. Our worship is not always religious. [78] [79] [80]

Since we can worship anything in any way we want, worship can be watered down and manipulated to fit our needs and not God's desires. However, God has something to say about this - "God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24). If we are to please God it must come from a sense of complete love of God. This is the first and greatest command. The Lord said that if we loved Him (Jesus) then we would keep His Father's commandments (John 14:15-24). "And He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:37)



A friend who practices Hinduism shared with me that their worship is comparable to an old-fashioned Rolodex. Depending on their location, family traditions, and personal needs, they select which gods to worship. It's fascinating that some followers worship all 330,000 million gods and goddesses! It appears that they can choose any deity they wish, regardless of gender, as long as they have faith. To put it into perspective, it's similar to picking up your kids after school and randomly selecting two children from the car line. Would you care which children you picked up? Or would you be satisfied as long as they were children? Probably not.

- **All religious paths lead to God.** "mille viae ducunt homines per saecula Romam." All Roads lead to Rome. In the past, starting from around the year 300 B.C., the Roman Republic (and later the Empire) began building many long, straight roads out of stone. These roadways were part of what made the Roman Empire so strong. The vast network of roads included 29 major roads, and they connected all 113 of the empire's provinces, with Rome itself at the center. They stretched all over most of what is now modern Europe, the Near East, and even into North Africa. Therefore, historically speaking, it was relatively true that all roads led to Rome. Regardless of which way you went, assuming you were in Europe or North Africa, you could make a few turns and find



78 "In that more generic sense of worship where it's just intense devotion and admiration of someone or something manifested through the sacrifice of time, talents or wealth in a way that the person or thing would appreciate - probably everybody does that, if only with themselves." (Carr)

79 "A lot of us, we worship success," Estrada said. "We worship and admire political figures. We worship social media because it has such a high place in our life because we give it a lot of time." (Ibid)

80 "You could use worship to describe any sort of, you know, act of sort of putting yourself in submission or surrender or bringing your full attention to anything that you love," Lemley said. "What we worship is what we love and in relationship to that, what we love is what we worship, and how we worship is what we become." (Ibid)

yourself back on the way towards Rome. Jesus said in John 15 that He is the True Vine and His Father is the Vinedresser. (John 15:1). There are no other roads or paths to God, only one. Any other path will lead a person to hell. True love will compel us to teach this truth to our neighbors. It's important to acknowledge that while some religions promote positive thinking and harmonious living,⁸¹ this does not mean it honors God or its path leads to heaven. Acceptable worship was to be done in spirit and in truth, and this means worshipping God alone and having in Jesus alone.

- ***The Gospel Unites and Does NOT Divide!*** Truth always divides, yet knowing the truth will set one free. How is this possible? Here is another seemingly contradictory statement, "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6). One more, "Peace I leave you, My peace I give you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, nor fearful." (John 14:27)

Luke 12: According to Jesus, it is inevitable for families to have conflicts because of Him. This may seem contradictory since He is known as the Prince of Peace. However, the peace that Jesus offers is the one that reconciles man and God. To attain this peace, one must submit to God's will, which can cause division among people. Preaching about love and peace through the Gospel will create tension among individuals since they must choose whether to support God or not. There is no middle ground- one must either be on the Lord's side or on Satan's. The Gospel will unite people and bring peace among men, only when people are at peace with God.

"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is narrow and the way is constricted that leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Matthew 7:13-14). Jesus' statement makes clear that there will be division. This division will be caused by man's decision and not God's.

"This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil." (John 3:19). You either love the light or you love the darkness, not both. The name of Jesus will divide people, and the world will hate us for bearing His name. But when the world hates us, it's because it hated Him first. It is not us whom they reject and are divided against, it is Jesus. (Ferrar)

Should Christians remain silent in order to avoid division and hatred? To coin a Pauline phrase, "God forbid." (Romans 6:2)⁸² We are **commanded** to go and tell the good news of how, when we were "yet dead in our sins He made us

⁸¹ Hindus believe that all life is sacred, to be loved and revered, and therefore practice ahimsa, noninjury, in thought, word and deed.

⁸² It is understood that Paul was referring to sin and grace. Grace is a *double* cure—not just forgiveness, but also a change in your very nature and character. For one who has died to sin to continue to live in it is a true contradiction of terms.

alive." (Ephesians 2:5). "How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14). We can't afford to remain to stay silent. We are the only hope some have to hear the Good News of Salvation.

What Do We Do and How?:

- **Live in peace while sharing the Gospel**

It is crucial to understand that our objective is not to conquer Canaan. Therefore, there is no need for us to strive to be like Joshua or Caleb and forcefully remove the pagan population. Instead, we must approach religious diversity in a peaceful manner. The Bible provides us with examples of dealing with similar situations. In the past, followers of God have had to travel to foreign lands and adapt to their surroundings while still holding on to their faith. We can draw inspiration from the Old Testament and learn how to live in a society that embraces different religions while remaining loyal to God and publicly declaring our faith.

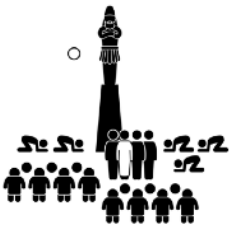
Example # 1: Daniel and other distinguished young men were taken out of Jerusalem and into Babylonian captivity. King Nebuchadnezzar wanted them to serve in his kingdom as advisors, but first, he wanted them to become Babylonians. How would the king accomplish this? Let's call it reeducation. He would begin by changing their Hebrew names to Babylonian names, changing their Jewish diets to the king's diet (clean to unclean - including imbibing wine and liquor), making them learn lingua terra (the language of the land) and forget their Hebrew tongue and the greatest change of all, give up their religion and embrace the king's pluralistic pagan religion.

"to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles, youths in whom was no defect, who were good-looking, showing intelligence in every *branch of* wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had ability for serving in the king's court; and *he ordered him* to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. The king appointed for them a daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank, and *appointed* that they should be educated three years, at the end of which they were to enter the king's personal service." (Daniel 1:3-5)

The book of Daniel, chapter 1, verse 6, reveals that Daniel had a strong determination not to defile himself. His mind was already made up even before he faced the situation. He had a clear plan in his mind - to stay faithful to God and to himself. He believed that God would rescue him if necessary, but even if he wasn't rescued, he would know that he had stayed

true to his beliefs and remained undefiled. But notice, it all began with **MAKING UP HIS MIND BEFORE** getting into the situation. As it would happen, Daniel and the young lads with him, stayed true to their faith and were protected by God, "Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials... As for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every *branch of* literature and wisdom; Daniel even understood all *kinds of* visions and dreams." (Daniel 1:9, 17) This favor (grace) was granted as a result of Daniel's resolve and acting out on that resolve. There were thousands of other Jews who were part of the captivity. They did not resolve and keep to the resolve as Daniel and the lads had. They were eating, drinking and worshipping with the Babylonians. (Daniel 3)

Example # 2: Worshipping of the golden statue: King Nebuchadnezzar was convinced (probably did not need much convincing ⁸³) to build a large statue of himself. During a specific time, upon hearing particular musical instruments, all individuals within hearing distance were expected to bow down and pay respect to the statue as a form of worship. **Three Jewish lads refused to comply with the king's decree and it did not go unnoticed.** In the given text, it is mentioned that certain individuals betrayed the young men, resulting in Nebuchadnezzar threatening to incinerate them in fiery furnaces. The king presented them with a choice - either worship him and be spared from the flames or refuse and face the consequences of being burned alive. However, the boys refused to take a second chance as they had already made up their minds. It is noteworthy that they remained respectful towards the king and did not resort to aggression. Instead, they asserted their faith in their God and put their trust in Him.



"Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king. Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, *very well*. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?"

"Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. If it be *so*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But *even if He does not*, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

⁸³ "Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was three score cubits and the breadth thereof six cubits : He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon." (Book of Daniel, Chap. III, 1.). The hollow barrel of clay of the University Museum is an original document, compiled probably shortly after 586 B.C. by order by Nebuchadnezzar, the king, with a true regard for posterity, and buried into the foundation of a temple. "The scholar shall read all my deeds which I have described in this document and he shall understand the excellence of my gods." (Legrain)

Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered toward Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. He commanded certain valiant warriors who were in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in order to cast *them* into the furnace of blazing fire. Then these men were tied up in their trousers, their coats, their caps and their *other* clothes, and were cast into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire. For this reason, because the king's command was urgent and the furnace had been made extremely hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire *still* tied up.

Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he said to his high officials, "Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?" They replied to the king, "Certainly, O king." He said, "Look! I see four men loosed *and* walking *about* in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of *the* gods!" Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he responded and said, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego came out of the midst of the fire. The satraps, the prefects, the governors and the king's high officials gathered around *and* saw in regard to these men that the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men nor was the hair of their head singed, nor were their trousers damaged, nor had the smell of fire *even* come upon them.

Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king's command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God. Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation or tongue that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap, inasmuch as there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way." Then the king caused Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego to prosper in the province of Babylon." (Daniel 3:13-30)

Example # 3: Living your life as a good citizen, while being faithful to God -

"Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men." (Titus 3:1-3)



"First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity." (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

Daniel was serving under King Darius. He was doing an excellent job but his political rivals could not stand him so they began to look for ways to get rid of him. But they could not find anything evil because Daniel lived a godly life.

"Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or *evidence of corruption*, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was *to be found* in him. Then these men said, "We will not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find *it* against him with regard to the law of his God." (Daniel 6:4-5)

His rivals knew that the only way to get the "goods" on Daniel was by way of his faith. They came up with a plan that would involve convincing the king to make it illegal to pray to any foreign god, especially the God of Daniel. As punishment for breaking the law the violator would be thrown into the lion's den. This would have probably driven most Christians into hiding. However, notice what Daniel did - he did what he always did, he continued to pray from his window. He didn't do this to be seen, it was not a new ritual because of the decree, this was something he had already been doing. Daniel's faithfulness was rewarded. "Let God be true, and all men liars!" (Romans 3:4)

"Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously. Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God. Then they approached and spoke before the king about the king's injunction, "Did you not sign an injunction that any man who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, is to be cast into the lions' den?" The king replied, "The statement is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked." Then they answered and spoke before the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the injunction which you signed, but keeps making his petition three times a day."

Then, as soon as the king heard this statement, he was deeply distressed and set *his* mind on delivering Daniel; and even until sunset he kept exerting himself to rescue him. Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, "Recognize, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or statute which the king establishes may be changed."

Then the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions' den. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you." A stone was brought and laid over the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his

own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing would be changed in regard to Daniel. Then the king went off to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no entertainment was brought before him; and his sleep fled from him.

Then the king arose at dawn, at the break of day, and went in haste to the lions' den. When he had come near the den to Daniel, he cried out with a troubled voice. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?" Then Daniel spoke to the king, "O king, live forever! My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime." Then the king was very pleased and gave orders for Daniel to be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. The king then gave orders, and they brought those men who had maliciously accused Daniel, and they cast them, their children and their wives into the lions' den; and they had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones." (Daniel 6:10-24)

Example # 4: "We cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:20)

Peter and John were punished for boldly speaking the Gospel of Christ. However, their resolve was not curtailed, even when they were asked to stop speaking in the name of Christ, then they were told to stop at the threat of beatings and incarceration. They continued to preach. In jail and out of jail; with and without scars; hungry and filled; these first-century Christians stood strong in their faith but did not lash out.

It's important to share the Gospel with our neighbors, even if it's uncomfortable. Read Andra Abdaly's interview on how she came to Christ in the works cited section under ([Abdaly, Andra](#))

Sometimes we may think the best route is not to offend our friends and neighbors by not sharing the Gospel of Christ. However, the best gift we can give any friend is the saving Gospel message!

"one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all." (Ephesians 4:5-6)

CHAPTER 10: RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

Have you had the opportunity to interact with individuals of various religions? If so, describe your experiences.

Our aim is to refute the argument without attacking the individuals involved. How can we achieve this goal effectively?

Are you comfortable interacting with individuals who have distinctive traits, such as different races, incomes, religions, senses of humor, or other differences? How do you interact with people who are different from you? Do you ever feel like others can tell when you're not being genuine?

the challenge

It's highly probable that you are surrounded by individuals who hold diverse beliefs from your own, be it at work, school, or among parents. Select one such person and extend an invitation to lunch with the intention to know them better as a person. It's not necessary to come equipped with a list of questions. Simply aim to build a connection with them.

Can you provide insight on how to approach conversations about the distinctions between Christianity and other belief systems according to Scripture? Explain the following scriptures.

- Eph. 4:14
- 2 Tim. 2:24-25
- Titus 3:2
- 1 Pet. 3:15

It's not our place to judge what's in someone's heart, but how can we determine if we should unite with them?

What are some ways to demonstrate God's love to nonbelievers without compromising our beliefs?

In what ways we can show love to our neighbors (who may have differing beliefs) without affirming their beliefs (page 189)?

the challenge

How can we demonstrate love towards our neighbors who hold different beliefs without endorsing their beliefs?

Why is the simple message of the popular bumper sticker COEXIST so appealing? Explain why CONTRADICT might be a more fitting bumper sticker.

How has the “pursuit of peace” caused people to be silent about the gospel?

How have some Christians replaced the gospel so that they don’t risk offending anyone?

In what ways we can show love to our neighbors (who may have differing beliefs) without affirming their beliefs (page 189)?

i .> challenge

Can you identify and elaborate on the three most commonly found lies that are hidden within the concept of pluralism, and why?

In what ways does the story of Daniel illustrate how we are to live in a pagan culture?

At times, we struggle to assert that Jesus is the sole path to God while still fostering sincere and compassionate relationships with individuals of varying beliefs. Why is this the case? What are some steps we can take to overcome this difficulty?

Is your child able to explain the plan of salvation with Scripture? Are you? Write down the plan of salvation with the Scriptures.

It's the Same, but Different

Look at these buildings. Extra points if you can identify them (the first one is the Taj Mahal). All of them are similar to each other. They look different but they all are buildings - windows, concrete, wide, tall, etc., but they are all basically the same. Imagine if we were to tell Ustad-Ahmad Lahori, the architect of the Taj Mahal, that his building was basically the same as the other buildings on this page. How do you think he would react? UNESCO describes the Taj Mahal this way, "The Taj Mahal is considered to be the greatest architectural achievement in the whole range of Indo-Islamic architecture." I don't think Mr. Lahori would take it as a compliment if he were told his Taj was similar to other buildings.



the challer 7

How might you compare this to the claim that all religions are basically the same?

Write out the following scriptures and reflect on how they relate to this lesson.

John 14:6

Isaiah 45:5-6

Romans 1:19-20



NEW AGE/SPIRITUALITY VOCABULARY



Cosmological determination

the movement of stars and other heavenly bodies determines cultural and societal—as well as individual—development. we must learn to accept ourselves as people who do not need to believe in anything that lies outside ourselves.

✓ **God is sovereign and omnipotent, and He created the cosmos.**



Self-deification

that we have everything in ourselves necessary to achieve fulfillment. The self is the highest good. We exist to guide ourselves, heal ourselves, and fulfill our own destinies. Usually taught as affirmations. "Affirm that you can achieve it and you will."

✓ **Mankind is in desperate need of a Savior. Mankind cannot save, redeem or heal himself - he needs God.**



Pantheism

the belief that god is in everything... there is a god-aspect within each of us—a tiny sliver of god in every person.

✓ **Man is a created being and when left to his own devices he will destroy himself and his environment. Romans 1**



Monism-All is One

a philosophical worldview in which all of reality can be reduced to one "thing" or "substance."

✓ **God is the ultimate existing One. He is the only being who is independent and self-existent. All other existing things—the universe—derive their existence from God, who created all things ex nihilo (out of nothing).**



Law of Attraction

The law of attraction is a philosophy suggesting that positive thoughts bring positive results into a person's life, while negative thoughts bring negative outcomes. Thinking about being wealthy will attract wealth.

✓ **Our financial success is determined by our decisions, our hard work, and our wise stewardship of what we have. No matter how positive our thoughts and how focused our mind is on wealth, if we have built mountains of debt, the bills will continue to come (Proverbs 22:7).**

Chapter 11: New Spirituality: Just a woke way of saying idolatry - I Don't Need God, I am "God."

A group of progressive people met in a funky-smelling-smoked-filled basement, sitting in the sukhasana⁸⁴ position. All of them chanted "namaste" with the goal of aligning their chakras and achieving **Christ Consciousness**.⁸⁵ I was invited to a **New Age/New Spirituality** meeting for my research. What I witnessed was a throwback to Woodstock and the Beatles revolution. Men wore rose-colored glasses, most sported bell-bottom pants, psychedelic tie-dyed shirts, and carried purses (man-purses). Some danced to The 5th Dimension's Age of Aquarius.⁸⁶

After the "ritual" no one attained Christ Consciousness, but two claimed they got close.

Christ Consciousness (according to the New Age Movement) **is the state of mind when one realizes he is divine and one with deity as Jesus realized He was Christ after He suffered and survived.** Once Jesus realized He was the Christ then he attained Christ Consciousness then could stop Him. According to this foolishness, humans have the same ability - to come in tune with oneself with the aid of astrology, yoga, seances, and tarot cards; the occult, channeling of the dead, and whatever else is needed to help bring the individual to achieve the perfect state of one's own deification. (Arcoleo) (Piippo). One becomes their own god, if not in this life in the one to come through reincarnation.

⁸⁴ also referred to as easy pose, is a yoga asana performed in a seated position. Easy pose aids in opening the hips and aligning the spine, and its simplicity makes it suitable for yogis of all skill levels, including beginners.

⁸⁵ In seeking Christ Consciousness, the idea is to transcend physical existence and experience one's own divinity and God-like nature. It is a path of love, peace, harmony and bliss, which leads to an understanding of the omnipresent higher power that connects all beings in the universe.

⁸⁶ "The lyrics of the song were rooted in astrology. Though astrologers differed on the year this new age would begin, the song proclaimed that a new "Age of Aquarius" was at hand sometime after the 20th century. This age was to be characterized by love, light and humane, kind relationships, unlike the current "Age of Pisces." (<https://bit.ly/30TkWau>)



NEW AGE/SPIRITUALITY VOCABULARY



Visualizations

Visualization is the use of mental concentration and directed imagery in the attempt to secure particular goals, whether physical, psychological, vocational, educational, or spiritual. Visualization attempts to program the mind to discover inner power and guidance. It is often used as a means to, or in conjunction with, altered states of consciousness (e.g., as produced by meditation), and is frequently used to develop psychic abilities or make contact with spirits. There are at least four identifiable types of visualization in our culture: academic, popular, occult, and Christian.



Yoga

The word yoga comes from the Sanskrit word *yogah*, which means "to yoke or to unite." As such, the goal of yoga is to uncouple oneself from the material world and to unite oneself with the God of Hinduism, commonly understood to be Brahman, the impersonal cosmic consciousness of the universe. Put another way, yoga is the means by which the user's mind is merged into the universal mind.



Tarot/Divination

Tarot cards are associated with divination—unlocking the secrets of the future by occult, supernatural means. Divination is strictly prohibited in the Bible. The word divination comes from the Latin *divinare*, meaning "to foresee" or "to be inspired by a god." To practice divination is to uncover hidden knowledge by supernatural means. It is associated with the occult and involves fortune-telling or soothsaying, as it used to be called.



Age of Pisces

The Age of Pisces defines the time where human beings engaged more than ever in the matters of the soul. The ideas of human transcendence, dissolution of the self and connection to a higher ideal consolidated in the collective consciousness and took shape in various forms.



Age of Aquarius

An astrological era believed to bring increased spirituality and harmony on Earth. Many try to connect this myth to Luke 22:10. There are varied views of when this age will begin, although most agree that the transition has begun. Woodstock and the hippie era ushered in the movement.

What is New Age and New Spirituality (NAM)?⁸⁷

The true essence of the "New Age" movement can be summarized quite simply;

EVERYONE CAN CREATE THEIR OWN REALITY,

BECAUSE EVERYONE IS THEIR OWN GOD.

What is NAM? "New Age Spirituality is an umbrella term that describes a contemporary religious movement, not an organized religion. Proponents of the movement encourage striving to reach one's full potential through an eclectic mixture of concepts and practices drawn from Eastern mysticism, Hinduism, Buddhism, metaphysics, naturalism, astrology, occultism, and science fiction. In its various forms, New Age spirituality is both *monistic* (believing that all reality is ultimately one) and *pantheistic* (believing that everything is divine). Unlike organized religions, New Age spirituality has no founding figure, structured leadership, official headquarters, or authoritative writings that are accepted by all proponents. New Age spirituality has held considerable social sway over Western culture over the past three decades. An estimated one in three Americans accepts various elements of New Age ideology." (H Bavinck et al., *Reformed Dogmatics / 2, God and Creation / Herman Bavinck ; John Bolt, General Ed. ; John Vriend, Transl. [from the Dutch].*)

There are many forms and flavors of New Age Spirituality, and its packaging and delivery

⁸⁷ New Age spirituality is an umbrella term that describes a contemporary religious movement, not an organized religion. Proponents of the movement encourage striving to reach one's full potential through an eclectic mixture of concepts and practices drawn from Eastern mysticism, Hinduism, Buddhism, metaphysics, naturalism, astrology, occultism, and science fiction. In its various forms, New Age spirituality is both *monistic* (believing that all reality is ultimately one) and *pantheistic* (believing that everything is divine). Unlike organized religions, New Age spirituality has no founding figure, structured leadership, official headquarters, or authoritative writings that are accepted by all proponents. New Age spirituality has held considerable social sway over Western culture over the past three decades. An estimated one in three Americans accepts various elements of New Age ideology.

depend on the time and prevailing trends. "New Age is a range of spiritual or religious practices and beliefs which rapidly grew in Western society during the early 1970s. Its highly eclectic and unsystematic structure makes a precise definition difficult. Although many scholars consider it a religious movement, its adherents typically see it as spiritual or as unifying Mind-Body-Spirit, and rarely use the term New Age themselves."

Most New Age followers deny Christianity as most people understand Christianity, but are religious in the idolatrous sense. It is their desire to become one with the spirit realm in some fashion - be it the universe, nature, cosmos, etc. In essence, almost every guru from times past to present teach that the ultimate goal is nirvana.

Nirvana has its origin in the 5th century B.C. with wealthy young man named a man named Siddhartha Gautama.

Gautama started to question the spiritual value of his opulent life and made the decision to relinquish all of his belongings and emotional ties, including his wife and young child. He aimed to comprehend the genuine essence of existence and perceived all of his connections as hindrances. Gautama became a vagrant without a home, surviving with only the bare necessities, fasting to the extent of near starvation. Legend has it that after Siddhartha embarked on this path, he attained enlightenment. While meditating under a tree, he witnessed his own past lives as well as those of others. Gradually, he acquired a flawless, all-knowing understanding of this world and the world beyond. In Buddhism, this state, which the Buddha couldn't relate in language, is called **nirvana**. The word is Sanskrit for "to extinguish." In this case, it means to extinguish ignorance, hatred and earthly suffering. The term is most closely associated with Buddhism, though it's applied to a similar concept in Hinduism. (Nhất Hạnh, Thích)

By reaching nirvana, one can break free from **samsara**, the cycle of **reincarnation** present in both Hinduism and Buddhism. Every soul is rewarded or punished in each life based on their past actions or **karma**, accumulated from their current and past lives (including animal lives). It's important to note that **karma** is not a result of divine judgment, but more similar to **Newton's law of motion - every action has an equal and opposite reaction**, occurring automatically. (Ibid)

Achieving **nirvana** means that one stops accumulating bad **karma** as they have transcended it. The rest of their life, and sometimes future lives, are spent "working off" any bad karma already accumulated. (Ibid)

When one has fully escaped the karmic cycle, they attain **parinirvana** - the ultimate state of **nirvana** - in the afterlife. Similar to Hindu **nirvana**, souls that have attained **parinirvana** are liberated from the cycle of **reincarnation**. The Buddha did not provide any details about what **parinirvana** entails. In Buddhist philosophy, it is beyond the scope of ordinary human understanding. (Ibid)

Its Origin

Tracing the exact origin of New Age Religion is difficult. However, **Genesis 3** provides insight from the Bible's perspective.

In Tina Kolniak's story on how she managed to leave the New Age Religion she says, "New Age spirituality feeds your ego by teaching that there is no right, no wrong, no objective truth—just a landscape of experiences that your soul goes through. It gives you false idols to worship, starting with yourself, teaching that you are always perfect where you are. It also teaches you to rely on spiritual experiences rather than rationality." (Kolniak). Satan convinced Eve that by taking matters into her own hands, she could become like God, with god-like knowledge and enlightenment. This is the aim of New Age Spirituality.

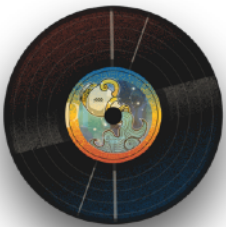
Idolatry is at the heart of New Age Spirituality. In almost every New Age Spiritual practice the occult is used in some way - stones (massage stones for chakras), tea leaves, tarot cards, astrology, yoga, meditation techniques, mediumship, seances, mysticism, Zen meditation, planetary healing, I Ching, alternative medicine, channeling and use of Chrystals, psychic readings, horoscopes, extraterrestrial, channeling the people from the "Ancient city of Atlantis," and science.



All this may sound silly to some people, but this is a multi-billion dollar industry, and it is as attractive as the "apple"⁸⁸ to Eve. (Genesis 3). God offered Mankind paradise, yet that was not enough. Man lusted for something different, not something greater, but something different. Lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and the pride of life drove Man out of Perfect Paradise and continues to drive Man to alternative spiritual paths seeking enlightenment. (Romans 1:18-19, 20-22)



New Age Spirituality is often attributed to Indian and Hindu religions, but this is not entirely accurate. The roots of this movement can be traced back to the story of Adam and Eve and have been present in every generation since. While questioning beliefs is not inherently wrong, progressive thoughts have led many to seek their own spiritual paths separate from God. The 1960s saw a surge in drug-induced enlightenment, thanks to the love and peace generation. Marijuana, LSD, and Acid were often used during so-called head trips, with users justifying the practice as a means of expanding consciousness. Even today, it is common practice in New Age Practice to use some type of chemical, whether legal or illegal to reach a state of mental altered consciousness.



⁸⁸ Eve's "apple" was the desire to be like God, to be her own god. The classic definition of idolatry.

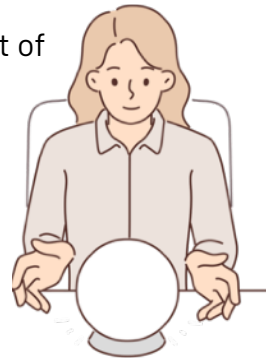
Common Beliefs

- Cosmological determination

Many astrologers believe that the positioning of stars and other celestial bodies significantly impacts the development of society and individuals. The **Age of Pisces**, in which people were focused on discovering their identity and existence, has now passed and we are in the **Age of Aquarius**. A desire for unity and peace characterizes this era. (Zengal). As a result, it is believed cultural changes are taking place and will continue to do so. To fully embrace this new age, we must let go of the beliefs and traditions influenced by the Piscean era. Instead, we should accept ourselves as individuals who do not need to rely on external beliefs. The idea that everything **in us and in the universe** (idolatry) is God is central to this new age, and we should strive to connect with this divine energy. This belief system, known as **pantheism**⁸⁹, acknowledges that the created order is part of God's eternal sovereignty.

- Monistic energy

Some followers of the New Age movement believe in the concept of God and the universe being a single entity. They reject the idea of biblical monotheism and instead believe in **monism**⁹⁰ or **pantheism**. According to these beliefs, every part of the universe contains divine energy, and in order to tap into this energy and regain personal power, one must achieve harmony with all aspects of the universe. The New Age movement presents various methods to achieve this unity, including ancient and modern forms of meditation, seances, divination, numerology, and incantation. Practicing yoga is also believed to aid the pursuit of balance and harmony in the New Age quest. (Ibid)



- Law of Attraction

This is likely the most well-known belief. It suggests that if we maintain a positive mindset and have faith, **God will grant us our every desire.** The Law of Attraction operates on the principle that "like attracts like." Those who teach this law often

advise us to have faith, imagine, or picture what we want from God, and He will make it come true for us.

⁸⁹ the belief that God and the universe are the same thing. The term comes from the Greek words "pan" and "theos", which mean "all" and "God" respectively. Pantheists believe that God is present in everything in the universe and nature. They believe that the universe, earth, and nature are divine and should be treated as sacred. Pantheism does not involve a belief in deities, spirits, or supernatural powers.

⁹⁰ a philosophical worldview that all of reality can be reduced to one thing or substance. It is the idea that all of existence is unified in a type of oneness. In monism, only one supreme being exists, which may be conceived of as a type of God.

The majority of Prosperity Gospel Preachers teach this falsehood (often “acronymned” LOA) - Joel Olsteen, T.D. Jakes, Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, Oral Roberts, Joel Osteen, Creflo Dollar, Benny Hinn, Paula White, et al. Take a look at the images below from a pastor’s website:


Wilmington For Christ Spirituality ▾ Relationships ▾ Self-Help ▾ Religion ▾ Motivational ▾ Survival ▾ f t p

Advanced Law of Attraction Techniques

Manifestation Magic

By Robert Kennerson on Sat, 12 Aug 2023

It is of great importance to know who is behind this wonderful program of knowledge, his name is Alexander Wilson. He is the author of the Manifestation Magic program. He is a neuroscience researcher who studied anatomy in college. He has studied and understood the functions of the brain together with the human body. At some point in his life time, things fell on the wrong and everything was bad for him but immediately he gathered the knowledge of vibrating at a much higher frequency, his life changed for good. This program has been used to transform the lives of thousands of people across the globe. This manifestation is very trustworthy, it will work for you. This great program consists of knowledge about oneself and ways to go about in to reveal the true person within you to achieve success. This program comes with two bonus programs as well namely; the chakra power system and the manifestation magic 360 days transformation. The manifestation magic program is divided into two modules. Module 1 is a quick-start manifestation guide while module 2 consists of energy orbiting and twilight transformation. This is a push-button manifestation system. You can create anything you desire in life and manifest abundantly by just pushing the play button. You don't need to read any book or study any course or perform exercises before you see results, you just need to listen and learn. [Read more here...](#)



[More Information](#)

Manifestation Magic Summary 🛒 👤

Rating: 4.8 stars out of 23 votes
Contents: Audio System
Author: Alexander Wilson
Official Website: manifestationmagic.com
Price: \$97.00

The “Read more here...” icon opens up a YouTube video that shows a blonde with cash raining on her. This is from a Christian pastor promising an “automatic pilot” program to “manifest” and “attract” money and women. Again, this is Eve’s “apple” the devil offered in Genesis 3 - the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. However, Christians must remember that our ultimate reward is in heaven. Our duty is to have faith and love God above everything else, not the things of this world (1 John 2:15).

Is it Possible To Manifest Health and Wealth When The World Feels Like It's falling apart? 100% Yes.

“How To Magically Manifest REAL, SPENDABLE CASH Starting In The Next 24 Hours!”

(WARNING - this page may change life).



Joel Olsteen, one of America's most famous LOA and Prosperity Gospel preachers teaches the following:

- Life and death is in the power of our tongue.
- Thank God in advance for your victory.
- Don't pray away your problems – trust you'll be right where you should be when the winds are done blowing.
- Relinquish control to God. (Stop worrying, stop losing sleep.)
- Let go of what didn't work out.
- God is for you, and wants you to make big bold requests.
- Make room for something big; you haven't seen your best days yet.
- The first place we lose the battle is in our own thinking. Break free in your thinking!
- Dismiss those negative thoughts; release yourself from your limitations.
- Start talking, thinking and acting like your victory is going to happen.
- Speak the seeds of faith into being: "I am blessed, I am healthy, I am strong, I am victorious."
- Take your praise to God, not your problems.
- Call the things that are not as if they already were.

What's wrong with these mantra sayings? Probably nothing, on the surface, and most can find their origin in the Scriptures. However, it's the wrapping that should concern us. The nugget of truth is wrapped with lies. For example, read Joel's explanation on why God made Zechariah mute after he told him his wife would give birth to John the Baptist: "Why did God take away his speech? It's because God knew that Zechariah's negative words would cancel out His plan....See, God knows the power of our words. He knows we prophesy our future. And He knew Zechariah's own negative words would stop His plan." (Olsteen). According to Olsteen, man has the power to change God's divine and eternal plan by just speaking. How arrogant as this places man above God!

- Follow your heart

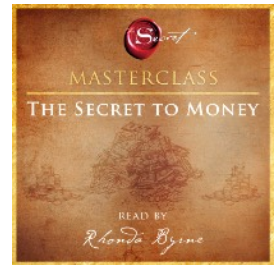
In the self-help section, this has already been discussed. The New Age Movement uses the same deception. What could be wrong with the idea of following your heart? What could go wrong? Well, many tragedies have started with people following their hearts. I'm reminded of a young lady who found out her partner had been unfaithful. Her solution? Her heart told her to get wasted the entire day and see what would unfold. There is no need to go into details how her night ended, one need only to imagine. The Scriptures warn us against following our hearts. Hearts (mind) need to be trained; if not trained properly, it will be like the blind leading the blind. "Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered." (Proverbs 28:26; Jeremiah 17:9).

The risk of following our emotions is that the enemy can manipulate us, leading us away from God's will and towards sinful behavior. The heart is emotional and inconsistent. Acting on an emotions and inconsistency is a recipe for disaster.

- We are little or mini gods Self-deification



Oprah Winfrey popularized a book called "The Secret". In it, the author, Rhonda Byrne, argues that humans can control every aspect of their lives through the Law of Attraction and energy. Byrne claims that individuals can write their own destinies and shape every event in their lives based on their thoughts. Some proponents of this philosophy even suggest that people can "claim" what they want and it will come to them. For instance, if someone desires to be cured from cancer, they simply need to declare it and they will be healed. Similarly, if someone desires to own a Maserati car, they only need to speak it into existence. However, this belief implies that individuals are their own gods.




The idea that sprinkling a little Bible and theology can attract masses and make one wealthy is prevalent in the church. However, this approach often promotes serving oneself and the desire for material wealth and fame. It presents a distorted view that Jesus died so we could have everything we want in this life. Although this may sound appealing, the Bible consistently teaches that God is holy, righteous, omnipresent and omniscient, while man has sinned and only through the death of Christ can one be made blameless before God, not through our own innate divinity.

Jeffery Ressler's Time Magazine piece, "The Secret of Success," exposes the book's purpose. He wrote, "The film's backers say they deliberately aimed to make "wealth enhancement" a major element of the project. "We desired to hit the masses, and money is the number one thing on the masses' minds," says Bob Rainone, a former IBM salesman and telcom exec who now serves as Byrne's U.S. business partner. Wealth enhancement is also part of *The Secret's* business plan." (Ressler)

- All roads lead to heaven

The New Age Movement teaches that no one religion is right and none are wrong, but that all have the answers because truth is subjective. Truth is what you want it to be. (This is why if a person desires to identify as a tiger he can be a tiger, it is his truth.). However, Jesus stated He is the Way, the Life, and the Truth. There is One Way, One Life, and One Truth. We may not like the One Way, One Truth, and One Life, but that does not change it. (John 14:6; Matthew 7:13; 2 Timothy 4:3)



The idea that there are no absolutes is extremely enticing in every generation. Some “cultural experts” call this phenomenon the cultural revolution, but every generation seems to experience this stage at some point - question and rebel against the status quo. “Live your truth?” The idea of creating our own truths can be tempting as it gives us the freedom to justify anything we do. For instance, if you are tired of having only one sexual partner even though you are married, you can justify it by creating your own truth that monogamy means your heart belongs to one person while your body can be open to many others. This way, you can avoid the inner conflict and excuse your actions. However, this may lead to moral and ethical concerns.

There is nothing godly about rejecting absolutes and one truth. “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6) Jesus is the Truth, He is the only Way, and He is the Life. There is no option left in His Word for substitutions and personal truths. “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Isaiah 5:20) “No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” (Luke 16:13)

These verses teach that there is good and evil. Adam and Eve disobeyed by serving two opposing forces, which destroyed the concept of love and loyalty. There is only one road that leads to enlightenment and His name is Jesus!

Its Appeal and Influence among Christians

Karma! Good and bad **karma**. “**Karma** will get you in the end.” If you have ever heard these words understand they come from the New Age Movement. Unfortunately, many Christians either believe in **karma** or somehow participate in it indirectly. Karma is the relationship between a person's mental or physical action and the consequences following that action. Karma is also known as “bad juju,” “the evil eye,” “jinx,” and “what goes around comes around.” Another common karma-related concept is “no one leaves this world without paying for what they have done.”

Karma is only one area of New Age beliefs that many Christians hold to as a belief system. This does not mean Christians are abandoning their religious beliefs for New Age Spirituality beliefs, but it does mean that many Christians have bought into these ideas and beliefs in addition to Christianity. Many will say, “I’m not superstitious, but...” Or, “I don’t

believe in karma, but..." And, "I think the traffic gods were against me today because..." Whether these things are said flippantly or not, these beliefs are at the heart of the New Age Movement.

Six-in-ten Christians, 'nones' hold at least one New Age belief

	Believe spiritual energy can be located in physical things	Believe in psychics	Believe in reincarnation	Believe in astrology	NET Believe in at least one
All U.S. adults	42%	41%	33%	29%	62%
Christian	37	40	29	26	61
Protestant	32	38	26	24	57
Evangelical	24	33	19	18	47
Mainline	43	44	33	30	67
Historically black	41	43	38	34	72
Catholic	47	46	36	33	70
Unaffiliated	47	40	38	32	62
Atheist	13	10	7	3	22
Agnostic	40	31	28	18	56
Nothing in particular	61	52	51	47	78

Source: Survey conducted Dec. 4-18, 2017, among U.S. adults.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Ouija Boards have been a staple among teens as a fun and "innocent" game. Many people see Ouija boards as harmless entertainment. Others believe Ouija boards are magic tools, portals to other dimensions, or divining oracles that allow spirits of the dead to communicate with the living. They are often considered to be communication gateways to those who have "passed over," and those who sit around a Ouija board are participating in a séance. Of course, this is based on the supposition that spirits, or ghosts, exist in the first place and that they can, or even want to, communicate with the world of the living. The number of young Christians engaging in playing with the Ouija boards has increased tremendously.

Movies:

Disney - It is worth considering how New Age occultism is being marketed to children, particularly in light of **Hitler's quote, "He alone, who owns the youth, gains the future"** (Hitler, 1935). The promotion of occultism to children can be seen in various media, such as movies, TV shows, books and video games. However, the earliest promoter of this theme was

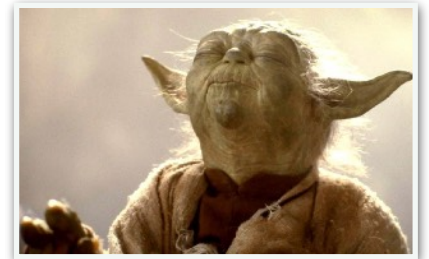


Disney. In the 1937 movie "Snow White," magic was used as a major theme in the storyline, and it has continued to be a recurring theme in many of Disney's cartoons, along with the supernatural portrayal of talking animals. In fact, Disney's tagline is "The Magic Kingdom." It is important to note that the Bible strongly condemns witchcraft in several places. Therefore, even though it may be popular with many Christians, Disney does not promote a Christian worldview and, in fact, promotes a New Age worldview.

How popular is Disney? In addition to the fantasy-based animation, Disney was a groundbreaker in the 1950s by having a theme park as a travel destination for families. This shows that a Disney animation is not just a onetime event to view on a movie screen, but families can embrace the "Magic Kingdom" by spending their family vacations immersing children in the "magic" experience to continue the fantasy. During opening year in 1955, Disney had its one-millionth visitor. By 1965, 50 million have visited. (Parker)

"Disney magic is even more elusive. Some say it is in the attractions, some say it is in the atmosphere, and some credit the can-do attitude of the Cast Members. But nearly everyone who visits the parks agrees: The magic is there; they just can't quite put their finger on where. And like the magician, Disney's magic also lies in the slight of hand, the hidden detail." (Veness)

Star Wars - Howe and Geisler in their book *The Religion of the Force* wrote; "We say that the Force best fits a conceptual model of God that is "mostly **pantheistic**" (in which all that is real is part of God) because many of the truth claims about the Force fit the **pantheistic** model well. One clear example of this can be heard when Obi Wan explained that the Force is, "an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us, penetrates us. It binds the galaxy together." This fits the pantheistic and panentheistic models of God well. But we also recognize that George Lucas and his saga are highly syncretistic and not every claim about the Force fits one single model. Other religio-philosophical claims about the Force in Star Wars seem to have been influenced by elements from **Zoroastrian dualism, Manichean dualism, Taoism, Qigong, Prana, Zen Buddhism** and **Stoicism**. With some exceptions, many of these elements fit very naturally with **pantheism**." (Geisler & Howe 96)



Mega Churches and their Music:

Megachurches are growing at a rapid pace all over the Western World. Their business model is approaching smaller churches with an aging membership and offering them a dynamic speaker and financial security. Or as one NPR reporter noted, "You need a building, we need a pastor." (Neuman). They keep the older pastor, allow him to serve in a limited capacity until retirement, beam in the sermon

via television screens with a message from the main campus from a hip young pastor, and “rebirth the church” with young people. What’s the attraction? According to the NPR report, it’s the pillar and core beliefs (ibid):

- Grace wins
- **Truth is relative** (Here is the New Age Movement - ETR)⁹¹
- Positive preaching, no negative (Here is the New Age Movement - ETR)
- Church is fun
- The mix includes church barbecues, pizza, and movie nights
- Worship is to be loud and casual - people can wear flip-flops and drink coffee
- Do not compete with the world; put the timeless message of Jesus into new wineskins
- Steer clear of politics

Hillsong church⁹² and **Hillsong United** have made their mark in the world with their magic-like light show and 7-11 songs (7 words repeated 11 times). These groups have influenced millions of young people almost to the cult level - some have even categorized them as a cult. (Frishberg). The media has done the public a favor by being enamored with the Hillsong pastors, celebrities (Justin Bieber, Jay-Z, Kardashians, Selena Gómez, Hailey Baldwin, Nick Jonas, Kevin Durant, Laura Lents, Kyrie Irving, Tyson Chandler, Vanessa Hudgens, Chris Pratt, Bono, Hailee Steinfeld, and Joe Jonas) and reporting extensively on the goings - on to the point where the public know a lot more about the inner workings of the cult than Hillsong would like. For example, here are some of their most blatant New Age Movement/Spirituality teachings:

(Source: Church Watcher)⁹³

- Their Word of Faith heresy is straight from the New Age and metaphysical cult movements Byrne (The Secret : The 10th Anniversary Edition)
- Their secret Prosperity heresy and rites stem not from Christianity but from the New Age movement, witchcraft, and ancient pagan idolatry (around Abraham’s day)
- Their leadership and teaching model reflect gurus from Hindu sects and metaphysical cults (between the 19th and 20th centuries)

⁹¹ The Scriptures warn how people will not want to listen to accept God’s Message as He has delivered it. One way is that in the last day people will not be able to handle the sound (healthy medicine) doctrine and will look for teachers who will tell them what they want to hear. (2 Timothy 4:3-4; Isaiah 30:9-13). Paul warned in Romans 1:19ff that eventually people would want to become their own god’s by professing to know more than God and becoming. The result would be that God would turn us over to our own appetites and allow us to follow our own thoughts.

⁹² Hillsong’s Vision Sunday 2023: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9B6BC1S7A>. - Notice the bottle of Merlot wine on the center table along with the loaf of bread. The entire service is a production show from beginning to end, a pitch for money with the promise of prosperity. It is in line with NAM.

⁹³ Church Watcher. “The World Finally Seeing Hillsong as a New Age Cult.” *Church Watch Central*, 3 Aug. 2015, churchwatchcentral.com/2015/08/03/the-world-finally-seeing-hillsong-as-a-new-age-movement/. Accessed 2 Sept. 2023.

- The god they preach is more related to the Hindu deity who is unlimited and cannot be limited, compared to the Christian God who is limited; (i.e. God cannot lie, God cannot murder, etc).
- Their utopian and totalitarian ideology of church growth and community reflects the philosophies of the Volk and the Führerprinzip before Nazi Germany (visionary leadership)
- Their worship reflects the ideas of ancient Greece and their pagan festivals, believing the experiences they create are glimpses into the divine (a form of pagan mysticism/spiritism/gnosticism which Jesus spoke against)
- Their teaching on the Holy Spirit (the anointing) is more akin to the 'Third Eye' sense of the New Age movement, a teaching that bypasses the mind and calls things that are not physical into being or seeing into the future⁹⁴
- their teaching on purpose and destiny reflects New Age and Buddhist thought on self-actualisation/enlightenment philosophies.
- their general teachings reflecting not Christianity but the world's latest ideas repackaged, twisting the Christian bible to sell the idea where Hillsong needs to go (see their Vision Sunday broadcasts)

These megachurches along with their music have had an influence on many Christians. Their money and influence has been funneled into the movie industry in some form and fashion - either by financing in part or by publicly endorsing and encouraging the membership to attend certain movie debuts. For example, the 2017 movie *The Shack* has at least thirteen New Age Movement themes and Joel Houston, Hillsong UNITED worship leader who writes a lot of Hillsong worship songs and is a major influence on many churches with his worship music said in a recorded video:

"... The reason I believe the people need to see this film, why 'The Shack' is perfect for right now, is because people are searching for something real. And something true. And something that is, uh, more substantial, more valuable, um, than all the noise there is, um. There is something beautiful that this film does and it's been a pretty amazing experience, just to be able to participate in it. Just want to encourage you, um, you need to see 'The Shack' and I don't say that lightly.

There's a million films that you can go see. But if there's one film you see this year, it needs to be 'The Shack' because not only is it a beautiful story, I believe that it helps people see why they're here, what they're made for and has the potential to change your life. I believe it will. Get out and see it."

⁹⁴ The third eye, also known as Ajna chakra, is an invisible eye usually located on the forehead. It's power is to boost perception of things that can't be seen by your eyes. This mystical eye is part of what is called "the subtle body," which means that while it can't be seen, it's considered an important force in governing how prana (energy) moves within the body. It is one of the seven chakras in Hindu tradition.

(Source: Joel Houston, Hillsong United on The Shack, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hG-LgEEYF3Q>, Uploaded by [Atlantic Records](#) 28/02/2017. (Accessed 17/03/2017.))

THIRTEEN HERESIES IN THE SHACK



The image shows a church service in progress. A large screen at the front of the sanctuary displays a winter scene with a small house and a figure, with the text "THE HERESY" below it. The audience is seen from behind, seated in rows. Below the screen, a list of 13 heresies is presented in two columns.

1. GOD THE FATHER WAS CRUCIFIED WITH JESUS.
2. GOD IS LIMITED BY HIS LOVE AND THEREFORE CANNOT PRACTICE JUSTICE.
3. GOD FORGAVE ALL OF HUMANITY, WHETHER THEY REPENT OR NOT.
4. ALL HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURES ARE EVIL.
5. GOD WILL NEVER JUDGE PEOPLE FOR THEIR SINS.
6. THE GODHEAD HAS NO HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE, JUST A CIRCLE OF UNITY.
7. GOD SUBMITS TO HUMAN WISHES AND CHOICES.
8. JUSTICE WILL NEVER TAKE PLACE BECAUSE OF LOVE.
9. THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS ETERNAL JUDGMENT OR TORMENT IN HELL.
10. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHICH WAY YOU GET TO GOD, JESUS IS WALKING WITH ALL PEOPLE IN THEIR DIFFERENT JOURNEYS.
11. JESUS IS CONSTANTLY BEING TRANSFORMED ALONG WITH US.
12. EVERYONE WILL MAKE IT TO HEAVEN.
13. THE BIBLE IS NOT TRUE BECAUSE IT REDUCES GOD TO PAPER.



NOTE to teachers: This short video documentary is an excellent resource that helps understand the origin and direction of NAM.

<http://youtu.be/yyktccr5apU?si=9YYLBvpsoaNCrO2x>

The Dark World of New Age Gurus | Documentary



CHAPTER 11

NAM

NEW AGE SPIRITUALITY



1 YOUR TURN

Have you ever used a Ouija board, tarot cards, numerology, astrology, or had your fortune told? Why do you think these things are so attractive to people, especially to children?

2 SEE IT?

Whatever people may call the New Age Movement, it is everywhere. Where have you seen it? Do you think it is dangerous? Why or why not?

3 OBSERVE

Over the course of the next few days be aware of T.V. commercials, shows, movies and other media. Write down and discuss anything you noticed that promotes NAM.

4 ATTRACTIVE

NAM is very attractive to many people. What parts of New Age seem attractive to you, and why? What parts of NAM sound like biblical truth?

Examples:

Law of Attraction -

- Faith of a mustard seed. If you had enough faith you would get whatever you wanted.
- If you are sick you need to pray with the faith and conviction that God will heal you, but if you pray with doubt don't expect God to hear you.

5 JESUS WRAP

In what ways has Jesus been used as a generic-go-to-one-size-fits-all Christmas wrap to make people soothe their consciences without making a moral change? And, have you done the same thing?

Examples:

All roads lead to heaven-

- There is no way God will send anyone to hell.
- We can't judge anyone. God is the only one who can judge.
- God is love and He understands and accepts my lifestyle.
- God is everywhere and God is everything, therefore no matter where I am He is commune.





CHAPTER 11

NAM

NEW AGE SPIRITUALITY



1 NEW MATH

Why do you think people believe they need to add crystals, tarot cards, seances, etc, to see their spiritual paths more clearly? How would you explain to your teenage child that using anything but the Bible will be disastrous?

Warning: Saying something like, "Don't do it because it's wrong." won't cut it with your teen. Your response has to be LOGICAL and it needs to make sense, a lot more logical than what their peers and the world is offering them.

2 WORDS

Define in your own words: New Age

3 WORDS

Define in your own words: Occult

4 WORDS

Define in your own words: Mysticism

5 WORDS

Define in your own words: Theism





CHAPTER 11

NAM NEW AGE SPIRITUALITY



1 WORDS

2 WORDS

3 WORDS

4 WORDS

5 WORDS

Define in your own words: Monism

Define in your own words: Pantheism

Define in your own words: Christ consciousness

Define in your own words: Law of Attraction

Define in your own words: Self-Dedication





CHAPTER 11

NAM

NEW AGE SPIRITUALITY



1 SELF-HELP

There is nothing wrong in "knowing yourself." According to NAM, our challenge is that we don't know ourselves well enough, and our problems can be overcome when we fully understand our true natures and reclaim our identities.

In what ways have you noticed an overemphasis on "knowing yourself" creeping into the church?

Example: Meditating, yoga...[nothing wrong with these things...]

2 WORDS

What is NAM? Explain the acronym and define a few of its influences.

3 POP CULTURE

What are some examples of New Age/Ne Spirituality that are present in Pop Culture?

4 CLAIM IT

Popular Pastors teach the "Claim it" philosophy, why is that wrong? Or is it wrong?

5 LISTEN

NAM in the church teaches one needs to empty the mind (meditate) and simply listen to the Holy Spirit, write down what He says, and then "just do it." Is this Biblical? Is this sound advice? Why or why not?





CHAPTER 11

NAM

NEW AGE SPIRITUALITY



1

I'm god

New spirituality teaches that individuals are either an extension of God or gods themselves. What draws people to this idea?

2

DESCRIBE

Pantheism

3

DESCRIBE

Divinity of all mankind

4

DESCRIBE

Relativism

5

DESCRIBE

Meditation





CHAPTER 11

NAM

NEW AGE SPIRITUALITY



1 CREATION

How does creation point us towards God? (Romans 1:19-20)

2 DIFFERENCE?

Is there any difference (if so what is the difference) between "God created," and God is creation?

3 TRUTH

Is there half truth in pantheism? What is it?

4 TRUTH

Is there half truth in divinity of all mankind? What is it?

- Examples:
- 2 Timothy 1:14
 - Ephesians 2:22
 - Ephesians 3:17
 - Colossians 1:27
 - Hebrews 3:6
 - 1 Corinthians 3:16
 - 1 John 4:12

5 TRUTH

Is there half truth in meditation? What is it?





CHAPTER 11

NAM

NEW AGE SPIRITUALITY



1

..0000M

2

WARNING

3

CASE STUDY

Transcendental Meditation aims to empty one's mind or turn off lucid thought by focusing on a phrase or word (a mantra) until rational discernment dissolves and the individual becomes a passive receptor for the spiritual realm. How is this different from biblical meditation as described in the following verses

- Psalm 1:1-2
- Psalm 7:7-12
- Phillipians 4:8

What warning does the Bible give us about seeking spiritual direction outside the Bible?

See: 2 Corinthians 11:14;
1 Timothy 4:1

Your daughter is a strong Christian. She tells you that after fasting and praying, she asked to hear from the Lord and received answers by engaging in automatic writing (automatic writing is where a person is not writing their own conscious thoughts, but allowing their hand to write supposedly subconscious thoughts or thoughts channeled from the spiritual realm). Your daughter's writing includes all sorts of Bible verses backing up the statements, but also contains several themes that contradict with Scripture in its full context. She is certain that because she asked to hear from the Lord, everything she wrote is from Him. How do you respond? (By the way, this is based on a true story.) (Ferrer, Hillary Morgan. *Mama Bear Apologetics: Empowering Your Kids to Challenge Cultural Lies* (pp. 134-135). Harvest House Publishers.)





CHAPTER 11

NAM

NEW AGE SPIRITUALITY



1 Bible

Explain

2 Timothy 4:3-4—"The time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths."

2 BIBLE

Explain

John 8:23—"He said to them, 'You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.'"

3 BIBLE

Explain

John 8:23—"He said to them, 'You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.'"

4 BIBLE

5 BIBLE



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- Arcoleo, Izzy. "What Is Christ Consciousness? - Definition from Yogapedia." *Yogapedia.com*, 23 Apr. 2020, www.yogapedia.com/definition/5806/christ-consciousness. Accessed 25 Aug. 2023. In seeking Christ Consciousness, the idea is to transcend physical existence and experience one's own divinity and God-like nature. It is a path of love, peace, harmony and bliss, which leads to an understanding of the omnipresent higher power that connects all beings in the universe.
- All that an individual needs in order to experience Christ Consciousness is the will and capacity to receive it, an open mind and dedication to any spiritual practice.
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Ashworth, Caitlin. "Schools Look to Expand LGBTQ Inclusiveness." *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, 19 Dec. 2017, www.gazettenet.com/transgender-policies-14402916. Accessed 30 May 2023. It's also important to add information about LGBTQ relationships and mental health to health and sex education lessons, Levin said, because, today, parents who are openly gay or transgender are more common. Levin said she plans to have a therapist talk to students about gender and sexual identities.

"That conversation I have not seen in a published text," Levin said.

Levin plans to have LGBTQ curriculum material for the ninth-grade wellness class this year, and she's working on gathering material for the middle school level.

To add diversity to classroom libraries, the district recently sent a flyer to Easthampton parents with a list of books the district would like to receive as gifts this holiday season. The list includes "Branded by the Pink Triangle," by Ken Setterington, about homosexuals in Nazi Germany, as well as other books by Asian, American Indian and Latino authors..

Associated Press. "California's New Sex Ed Guidelines Encourages Teachers to Discuss Gender Identity, Masturbation." *NBC News*, 8 May 2019, www.nbcnews.com/news/education/california-s-new-sex-ed-guidelines-encourage-teachers-talk-students-n1003596. California has overhauled its sex education guidance for public school teachers, encouraging them to talk about gender identity with kindergartners and give advice to LGBT teenagers for navigating relationships and having safe sex.

Avila, Alejandro. "17 NBA Players Make Tens of Millions off Sneakers Made with Chinese Slave Labor Cotton." *OutKick*, 28 Jan. 2022, www.foxnews.com/sports/17-nba-players-millions-chinese-slave-labor-cotton. Accessed 1 June 2023. The call for human rights remains a motif throughout American sports media. As Kanter Freedom's message remains taboo in NBA circles, the Association may be showing its hand on the duplicitous nature of doing business at the cost of violating fundamental human rights.

AVILA, JAIE. "'Porn Disguised as Education': Parents Upset by Books Pulled for Review." *NBC Montana*, NBC Montana, 3 Feb. 2022, nbcmontana.com/news/nation-world/porn-disguised-as-education-parents-upset-by-books-pulled-for-neisd-review. Accessed 5 June 2023. The News 4 Trouble Shooters shared the content of some of those books with parents to get their opinions. Parents were shown four of the books on the list: two

teach kids about being transgender, one is an illustrated book on whiteness. A fourth book, which led to the district's review, graphically describes a sex act between two ten-year-old boys. It was found in two elementary school libraries.

"These books should not be removed from the libraries. They should be put back in circulation. Our students deserve these different voices and different perspectives," said one parent who spoke at a Dec. 13 school board meeting..

Baker, Vicky. "The Preachers Getting Rich from Poor Americans." *BBC News*, 29 May 2019, www.bbc.com/news/stories-47675301.

Barna Group. "Church Dropouts Have Risen to 64%—but What about Those Who Stay? - Barna Group." *Barna Group*, Issachar Companies, 2016, www.barna.com/research/resilient-disciples/.

Barry, J. D., et al. "Areopagus." *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, edited by W Widder, Lexham Press, 2016.

Basinger, David. *Religious Diversity*. Routledge, 2002.

Beckwith, Francis, and Gregory Koukl. *Relativism : Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air*. Baker Books, 1998. "When truth dies, all of its subspecies, such as ethics, perish with it. If truth can't be known, then the concept of moral truth becomes incoherent. Ethics becomes relative, right and wrong matters of individual opinion. This may seem a moral liberty, but it ultimately rings hollow. "The freedom of our day," lamented a graduate in a Harvard commencement address, "is the freedom to devote ourselves to any values we please, on the mere condition that we do not believe them to be true.""

Berger, Peter L. "The Good of Religious Pluralism | Peter L. Berger." *First Things*, Apr. 2016, www.firstthings.com/article/2016/04/the-good-of-religious-pluralism.

Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith*. Holman Bible Publishers.

Charles Lyell, quoted in Katherine Lyell, *Life, Letters and Journals of Sir Charles Lyell, Bart* (London: John Murray, 1881), Vol. 1, p. 268. To a fellow uniformitarian geologist, Lyell wrote in a private letter that he wanted to "free the science [of geology] from Moses."²² In other words, he wanted to silence God's eyewitness testimony about the supernatural origin of a fully functioning universe of stars, planets, plants, animals, and people and His testimony about the global Flood of Noah that disrupted the normal course of nature

as God initiated some processes and accelerated others to bring about His judgment of the world. Creation and the Flood were rejected for philosophical/religious reasons, not because of anything Lyell and Hutton saw in the rocks and fossils. By the 1840s, Lyell's view became the ruling paradigm in geology.

Curry, M. D., ed. (1985). *Humanism: Devotion to Man*. Florida College Bookstore.

Ellsworth, W. E. (1985). The School System: Values Clarification. In M. D. Curry (Ed.), *Humanism: Devotion to Man*. Florida College Bookstore. Psychologists, philosophers, and educators began, a few decades ago, to urge that parents not impose their religious beliefs, their values, or their morals upon their children. Parents listened and obeyed. More children attained adulthood, in age at least, without benefit of the instruction that God had commanded parents to accomplish (Eph. 6:4). We were told, "These sources of values are outmoded today" (20, p. 207). And too many parents and teachers believed it! Novello states, "If American adults seem to have lost their way, it is no wonder that our children are often bewildered, tense, and anxiously unsure of themselves" (26, p. 42). Further, says Novello, "For permissive, uncertain parents, everything is negotiable: There are no resolute values; kids are left to rediscover the wheel—if they don't get run over by it first" (26, p. 8).

Evans, C. S. (2002). *Pocket dictionary of apologetics & philosophy of religion*. InterVarsity Press.

Geisler, N. L. (1999). Apologetics, Argument Of. In *Baker encyclopedia of Christian apologetics* (pp. 36–37). Baker Books.

Hill, Frances. "Is Humanism Molesting Your Child?" (Pro Family Forum, P.O. Box 14701, Fort Worth, TX 76117)

---. *The Many Altars of Modernity toward a Paradigm for Religion in a Pluralist Age*. De Gruyter, 2014.

Bernard, Tara Siegel. "Mortgage Fees (Seriously) Spurred Outrage on TikTok. Here's Why." *The New York Times*, 7 May 2023, www.nytimes.com/2023/05/07/your-money/mortgage-fees-credit-score-rules.html.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Historical Reliability of John's Gospel : Issues and Commentary*. Intervarsity Press, 2011.

Bogardus, Tomas. "The Problem of Contingency for Religious Belief." *EPLACE: Preserving, Learning, and Creative Exchange*, 2013, place.asburyseminary.edu/faithandphilosophy/vol30/iss4/1/. Accessed 22 June 2023.

Bote, Joshua. "Fraud, Private Jets and a Lamborghini: 10 Televangelists Who Have Faced Controversy." *USA Today*, 17 June 2019, www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/06/17/joel-osteen-kenneth-copeland-10-televangelists-trouble/1471926001/.

Boyer, Lindsay. "What We Can Learn from Religious Pluralism." *Spirituality for Questioning Minds*, 22 June 2023, www.lindsayboyer.com/pluralism. Accessed 22 June 2023. We live in a culture in which many of us are increasingly exposed to faith traditions other than the ones with which we grew up. Once we become knowledgeable about other faiths, we are unlikely to have the same prejudices we may have learned as children. We see that people of other faiths are struggling with moral issues similar to our own and we begin to believe that there may be more than one path to God and that our own religion may not be the sole and exclusive source of truth. Perhaps we feel the oneness of God through other faiths and wonder whether other paths might be better suited to our needs than the one into which we were born. As we become accustomed to living in more diverse communities, we may learn that it is possible to exchange ideas with others without betraying our own beliefs and that it is possible to hold strong beliefs without feeling that our beliefs are the only beliefs possible for anyone.

I have felt the presence of God so strongly in Hindu worship and in Zen meditation that I cannot help but hold pluralistic beliefs. It is so clear to me that Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism are all legitimate paths to experience of the ultimate that I naturally want to extend the same respect towards other religions. I have developed a trust that other people's attempts to worship and encounter the divine spring from a source of goodness within themselves. Clearly not all people who feel a longing for the holy are ultimately able to act in moral ways, at least not all the time, but the longing itself remains a seed of goodness within them.

Bromwich, Jonah Engel. "Everyone Is Canceled." *The New York Times*, 28 June 2018, www.nytimes.com/2018/06/28/style/is-it-canceled.html.

Brown, David P. "What Is Truth? John 18:38." *Sad Statements of the Bible*, edited by Michael Hatcher and 2000 Bellview Lectures, Bellview Church of Christ, 2000, pp. 12–25. Some think we can only look only diligently look for truth-but in reality never find it. However, Jesus said, "ye shall know the truth" (John 8:32). This does not mean that one claims to know everything because he knows something...

The Bible has no meaning if we cannot know what it teaches. There would be no reason to study, learn, live, preach and defend the truth. However, the Bible states that it should be studied, learned, lived, preached, and defended (2 Tim. 2:15; 3:7; Phil. 1:27; 2:12-16; Mat. 5:16; Jude 3). To teach otherwise is to teach error. And, it is the teaching of error that makes one a false teacher. .

Brown, Jon. "Liberal Mainline United Methodists See More than 5,000 Congregations Leave amid Arguments over Sex, Gender." *Fox News*, Fox News, 12 June 2023, www.foxnews.com/us/liberal-mainline-united-methodists-5000-congregations-leave-amid-arguments-over-sex-gender. Accessed 13 June 2023.

Bruce, F. F. *Defending First-Century Faith: Christian Witness in the New Testament*. 1st ed., Kingsley Books, 1977, p. 123, ebook. Accessed 15 Dec. 2022.

Bruce, F. F. *The Book of Acts*. Eerdmans, I.E., 1988. On the Areopagus.

---. *The Canon of Scripture*. IVP Academic, 2018.

Bryant, Dr. Beauford H., and Dr. Mark S. Krause. *John - College Press NIV Commentary Series*. Edited by Dr. Anthony L Ash and Dr. Jack Cottrell, 7th ed., College Press, 1998.

Burtwell, Paul Lyndon. "John Lennox - Stephen Hawking Was Wrong." *Www.youtube.com*, 5 July 2021, www.youtube.com/watch?v=JxrhgkhoU98&t=14s. Accessed 6 Apr. 2023.
Burtwell interviewing Lennox

00;00;04;00 - 00;00;24;23

Burtwell

The late Stephen Hawking once commented, Because there is such a law as gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing. And you famously responded in, I hope I quote you right on this job. That nonsense remains nonsense. Even when talked by World famous scientists. Please, could you explain the meaning and context behind this exchange?

00;00;25;07 - 00;00;56;14

Lennox

Well, the context is exactly what you quoted Stephen Hawking statement and sheer nonsense. Because there is a law like gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing. Because there is a law, because there is something the universe will create

itself from nothing. That is a flat contradiction. Anybody? Way of thinking. But that's only the start. The universe will create itself.

00;00;56;19 - 00;01;25;14

Lennox

What does that mean? You have how you say that X creates Y. I mean, roughly speaking, that if you've got X, you'll get y. If I say X creates X, well, that simply means that nonsense remains nonsense. Talking about that is utter nonsense. And many people have actually pointed that out, not only Christian thinkers like like myself. It is sheer nonsense.

00;01;25;26 - 00;01;52;00

Speaker 2

And then there's another confusion in there, a third one, because there is a law like gravity. He doesn't say because gravity exists. He may mean that, of course, but I think the hand that their lies another massive confusion of thought that laws are creative, which are not. No. Newton's laws of motion never moved to billiard ball in the history of the universe.

00;01;52;00 - 00;02;20;01

Speaker 2

People were keys to that. The laws describe the motion and that's a problem. And Hawking said that elsewhere that he imagined and Paul DAVIES does the same, that there was a law that created things. But laws are not creative, they're not causes. So here is philosophical idiocy, and that is why I say nonsense remains nonsense. Even a famous scientist talk.

00;02;20;12 - 00;02;28;15

Lennox

Even if it doesn't, it doesn't stop it being nonsense. Yeah. Do you know Stephen.

00;02;28;15 - 00;02;34;26

Speaker 1

Hawking kind of posited where the law of gravity would have existed prior to the creation of spacetime and matter to.

00;02;34;27 - 00;03;10;00

Lennox

You now know that the great problem for many of these physicists is that they are faced with the problem of the existence of a law like universe. Where does that come from? And they never really address that question as far as I can see. I just finished revising my book garden. Stephen Hawking In light of the fact that they died not long ago, and I reflected on that a bit more, but it seems to me that that remains a sticker, a real problem.

00;03;10;00 - 00;03;22;19

Lennox

The origin of the law, like nature of the universe that we can formulate in terms of mathematical equations. And so to me, that's the evidence of mind behind the universe.

Byrne, Rhonda. "Rhonda Byrne - Official Website of Author Rhonda Byrne." *Rhonda Byrne - Official Website of Author Rhonda Byrne*, 2 Sept. 2023, www.rhondabyrne.com. Accessed 2 Sept. 2023.

---. *The Secret : The 10th Anniversary Edition*. Atria Books ; Hillsboro, or, 2016.

C-Span. "Hearing on Impact of Plastic Pollution | C-SPAN.org." *Www.c-span.org*, 15 June 2023, www.c-span.org/video/?528770-1/hearing-impact-plastic-pollution. Accessed 20 June 2023. Senator Mark Mullins and Angelle Bradford student at Tulane University (In my dream world I would like to end all plastics manufacturing. 47:58).

Carey, Greg. "Self-Help and the Gospel." *HuffPost*, 6 Nov. 2013, www.huffpost.com/entry/selfhelp-and-the-gospel_b_4220149. Accessed 2 Jan. 2023.

Carr, Madeleine. "Exploring the Meaning of Worship." *Pepperdine Graphic*, 4 Feb. 2019, pepperdine-graphic.com/exploring-the-meaning-of-worship/#:~:text=Nonreligious%20worship&text=. Accessed 25 June 2023.

Carrier, Richard. *Sense and Goodness without God*. AuthorHouse, 2005. The universe has either always existed or had a purely natural origin, being neither created nor designed.

Either way, naturalists hold nature (rather than, say, God or Tao) to be the ground of all being. The popular Big Bang cosmology was developed within this assumption, proposing that the observable universe had a beginning, unfolding from a process of natural laws. But this does not resolve the question of whether all that exists began to exist at once or whether a being of some sort has always existed. Some naturalists propose a multiverse theory where it is thought that the observable universe is only part of a much larger whole. Citing the first law of thermodynamics, other naturalists propose that matter has always existed; matter, not the universe in its current state, exists eternally.

Carroll, Sean. *The Big Picture*. Penguin Publishing Group, 2016. There is just no such thing as God, or ghosts, or human souls that reside outside of the body. Everything in existence belongs to the natural world and is accessible to science, he argues. In his new book “The Big Picture: On the Origin of Life, Meaning, and the Universe Itself,” out this week from Dutton, Carroll describes a guiding philosophy along these lines that he calls poetic naturalism. It excludes a supernatural or spiritual realm but still allows plenty of room for life to have a purpose.

“I think we can bring ideas like meaning and morality into our discussions of the natural world,” Carroll says. “The ways that we talk about the universe are what make it meaningful.” He eloquently argues that point in his far-ranging book, which takes on the origins of consciousness, the likeliness of God based on a rigorous application of Bayesian probability statistics, and many other “big” questions that scientists are often loath to tackle..

Carter, Charles W., et al. *The Wesleyan Bible Commentary*. Hendrikson, 1986.

Chasmar, Jessica. “Dem Witness Tells House Committee Men Can Get Pregnant, Have Abortions.” *Fox News*, 18 May 2022, www.foxnews.com/politics/house-committee-witness-men-get-pregnant-have-abortions. Accessed 6 June 2023.

Choi, Charles Q., and Scott Duttfield. “7 Theories on the Origin of Life.” *Live Science*, Live Science, 24 Mar. 2016, www.livescience.com/13363-7-theories-origin-life.html.

Church Watcher. “The World Finally Seeing Hillsong as a New Age Cult.” *Church Watch Central*, 3 Aug. 2015, churchwatchcentral.com/2015/08/03/the-world-finally-seeing-hillsong-as-a-new-age-movement/. Accessed 2 Sept. 2023.

Copan, Paul. *True for You, but Not for Me : Deflating the Slogans That Leave Christians Speechless*. Bethany House Publishers, 1998.

Copan, Paul, and William Lane Craig. *Contending with Christianity's Critics : Answering New Atheists & Other Objectors*. B & H Academic, 2009. Dawkins's Delusion, Confronting Naturalism: The Argument from Reason.

Copan, Paul, and William Lane Craig. *Come Let Us Reason*. B&H Publishing Group, 2012.

Coppenger, Mark. *Moral Apologetics for Contemporary Christians*. B & H Publishing Group, 2011. Have Christians grown accustomed to those who defame the Church? Whether it's a best-selling author who claims "religion poisons everything" or an atheist comedian whose punch lines aren't hassled by the burden of proof, foes of the faith continue to declare Christianity morally deficient without much resistance.

The greatest challenge to the life and witness of the church in our age is widespread moral confusion and denial of moral authority. This condition has been greatly influenced by a number of factors, including postmodern denial of objective truth, secularization of common life, pluralization of worldviews, and privatization of religion—all accompanied by growing hostility toward anything....

Cornelius Van Til, and William Edgar. *Christian Apologetics*. P & R Pub, 2003, ref.ly/logosres/cvtapolog?ref=Page.p+80&off=1967&ctx=f+will+may+lead+us.

It is of the greatest import to note that the natural man need not in the least object to the kind of authority that is involved in the idea of irrationalism. And that chiefly for two reasons. In the first place the irrationalism of our day is the direct lineal descendent of the rationalism of previous days. The idea of pure chance has been inherent in every form of non-Christian thought in the past. It is the only logical alternative to the position of Christianity according to which the plan of God is back of all. Both Plato and Aristotle were compelled to make room for it in their maturest thought. The pure "not-being" of the earliest rationalism of Greece was but the suppressed "otherness" of the final philosophy of Plato. .

Cowan, Steven B., and Terry L. Wilder. *In Defense of the Bible*. B & H Publishing Group, 2013.

HC stresses the human rather than the divine authorship of the Bible (though it does not necessarily deny divine inspiration) and seeks to discover the message that the original human author intended to communicate through the text to his original readers. Because of the human element in the origin of the Bible, practitioners of the historical critical method believe that it is appropriate to interpret the Bible like any other ancient

document. The interpreter must seek to understand the language of the text and its historical background in order to discover its original meaning.

D Douglas Hillyer, et al. *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. Interscience Press, 1998.

Delaney, Matt. "Activists Chant 'Coming for Your Children' during Drag Queen March in New York." *The Washington Times*, 25 June 2023, www.washingtontimes.com/news/2023/jun/25/activists-chant-coming-your-children-during-drag-q/. Accessed 1 July 2023.

Dill, K. A., and L. Agozzino. "Driving Forces in the Origins of Life." *Open Biology*, vol. 11, no. 2, Feb. 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsob.200324>. Abiogenesis by way of hydrothermal vents continues to be investigated as a plausible cause of life on Earth. In 2019, scientists at University College London (opens in new tab), successfully created protocells (non-living structures that help scientists understand the origins of life) under similar hot, alkaline environmental conditions to hydrothermal vents.

Dmitri Antonovich Volkogonov. *Stalin : Triumph and Tragedy*. Phoenix, 2003.

Dotson, Quinnie. *Appalachian Truths*. Interview by Ed Rangel, 2001. The truth will stand when the world is on fire.

Driscoll, Mark. *New Days, Old Demons: Ancient Paganism Masquerading as Progressive Christianity*. Real Faith , 2023.

Dunn, Lily. "What Is the New Age Movement?" *Explore God*, 2023, www.exploregod.com/articles/what-is-the-new-age-movement.

Dunphy, John J. "A Religion for a New Age." *Medium*, 17 Oct. 2020, johnjdunphy.medium.com/a-religion-for-a-new-age-f812839c4cb8. I am convinced that the battle for humankind's future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as the proselytizers of a new faith: a religion of humanity that recognizes and respects the spark of what theologians call divinity in every human being. These teachers must embody the same selfless dedication as the most rabid fundamentalist preachers, for they will be ministers of another sort, utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to convey humanists values in whatever subject they teach, regardless of the educational level — preschool day care or large state university. The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new — the rotting corpse of Christianity, together with all its adjacent evils and misery, and the new faith of humanism, resplendent in its promise of a world in which the never-realized Christian ideal of "love thy neighbor" will finally be achieved..

Durant, Will. *The Complete Story of Civilization : Our Oriental Heritage, Life of Greece, Caesar and Christ, Age of Faith, Renaissance, Age of Reason Begins, Age of Louis XIV, Age of Voltaire, Rousseau and Revolution, Age of Napoleon, Reformation*. Simon & Schuster, 2014. How do we arrive at objective truth, particularly when it comes to moral issues? The historians Will and Ariel Durant wrote the award-winning *The History of Civilization* (1976), from which they concluded in another book, *The Lessons of History* (p. 50-51), “There is no significant example in history, before our time, of a society successfully maintaining moral life without the aid of religion.” The essence of this religious contribution to formulating an objective moral code is found in The Decalogue (The 10 Commandments), which includes prohibitions against murder, adultery, bearing false testimony, and stealing, for example. .

Ecker, Emma. “Breaking down Global Estimates of Human Trafficking: Human Trafficking Awareness Month 2022 | Human Trafficking Institute.” *Human Trafficking Institute*, 12 Jan. 2022, traffickinginstitute.org/breaking-down-global-estimates-of-human-trafficking-human-trafficking-awareness-month-2022/. 24.9 million victims of human trafficking
The ILO estimates there were 24.9 million victims of human trafficking around the world. The report uses the term “forced labour” to describe the forms of exploitation commonly referred to as human trafficking in the United States and other nations. The 24.9 million figure includes both sex trafficking, or commercial sexual exploitation, and forced labor exploitation, both in the private sector and state-imposed. .

Editors - Pride Month. “Pride Month.” *Wikipedia*, 19 June 2023, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pride_Month#:~:text=LGBT%20Pride%20Month%20is%20a. Accessed 20 June 2023. n June 1999, U.S. President Bill Clinton declared “the anniversary of [the] Stonewall [riots] every June in America as Gay and Lesbian Pride Month”.^[10] In 2011, President Barack Obama expanded the officially recognized Pride Month to include the whole of the LGBT community.^{[10][11]} In 2017, however, Donald Trump declined to continue the federal recognition of Pride Month in the United States,^[12] though he later recognized it in 2019 in a Tweet later used as a Presidential Proclamation.^[13] After taking office in 2021, Joe Biden recognized Pride Month and vowed to push for LGBT rights in the United States, ^[14] despite previously voting against same-sex marriage and school education of LGBT topics in the Senate.^[15]

In addition, Pride Month is often observed in several LGBT-affirming religious congregations..

Edwards, David. "Restrooms and Facilities." *Gender Inclusive Schools*, 20 June 2023, www.genderinclusiveschools.org/restrooms-transgender-student-policy. Accessed 20 June 2023.

Ellis, George, and Joe Silk. "Scientific Method: Defend the Integrity of Physics." *Nature News*, vol. 516, no. 7531, Dec. 2014, p. 321, <https://doi.org/10.1038/516321a>. The multiverse is motivated by a puzzle: why fundamental constants of nature, such as the fine-structure constant that characterizes the strength of electromagnetic interactions between particles and the cosmological constant associated with the acceleration of the expansion of the Universe, have values that lie in the small range that allows life to exist. Multiverse theory claims that there are billions of unobservable sister universes out there in which all possible values of these constants can occur. So somewhere there will be a bio-friendly universe like ours, however improbable that is.

Evans, Jeremy A., and Daniel Heimbach. *Taking Christian Moral Thought Seriously*. B&H Publishing Group, 2011.

Ferrer, Hillary Morgan. *Mama Bear Apologetics : [Empowering Your Kids to Challenge Cultural Lies]*. Harvest House Publishers, 2019.

FOCLOnline. "What Problems Does Naturalism Have in Explaining Life?" *Www.youtube.com*, FOCLOnline, 28 Aug. 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgzoN5WyPOc. Accessed 17 Apr. 2023. Greg Koukl, Founder and President of Stand to Reason, answers questions related to his evening plenary address, "Naturalism: Bumping into Reality," from the 2014 European Leadership Forum.

Complete Interview Transcript as delivered:

"I think Christian theists have a tremendous advantage over naturalists because theism has explanatory power. That is, when you look at the particular details of the Christian worldview, you can see how they fit the way the world actually is. There's an explanation there. This, by the way, this this fit between a point of view and the way the world is, is the classical definition of truth. When your claim fits the world, that's a true claim.

All right. So I'm just I'm talking here about now the truth of Christianity. There's a fit there. It has explanatory power in a way that naturalism does not have. All right. So

when you think about naturalist bumping into reality, what are some of those bumps?

What are those Some of those things that they can't explain that we can explain? What about stuff? Stuff. The world is filled with stuff. There's all kinds of stuff in the world. Where did everything come from? What a lot of stuff come from?

Well, what caused the beginning of the universe? Now, when we can, nobody seems to believe. And I think this is pretty sound now in terms of physics, that the universe was eternal. Everybody is pretty convinced, skeptics alike, that the universe came into existence at some point in time, is called the Big Bang. Here's my question. What or who bang the big bang? Big Bang needs a big bangger.

Right. That's the cosmological argument in a nutshell. So did the Big bang bang itself? Well, that doesn't seem to make any sense. You know, things just don't come into existence out of nothing. That's not our experience. If my wife came home and saw a Mercedes Benz SL in the garage and asked me where it came from, it wouldn't probably be very persuasive if I said. Just popped into existence Sunny with the keys in the ignition and my name on the license plate. I don't know where it came from. Those things happen, you know. Of course. No, those things don't happen. It doesn't make any sense. In answering the question what caused the universe it incidentally, you have one of two choices. Something or nothing. That's it. Something or nothing? It doesn't make any sense to say nothing because things don't just pop into the universe like that caused out of nothing.

This is it. Even if one were to argue, Well, it's possible on a quantum level or something like that. Look at what's the odds on favorite. The odds on favorite is the Mercedes Benz didn't just this was not a quantum event. You know it was the odds on favorite is something or someone is responsible for that and the same answer applies to the cosmos. Something or someone, at least in principle. But it's got to be a what caused that is adequate to the effect.

And when you look at what would be adequate to the effect, the beginning of the universe, it's going to be something powerful, something really smart, something who is

an agent. So there's a person, not a thing. And the reasons for these things, but certainly not nothing now. So for the bump up stuff, how do you explain stuff the the naturalist can't explain? It has no resources to explain it. The only thing you can say is everything came from nothing, which is patently ridiculous. It's worse than magic and magic. You have a you have a magician pulling a rabbit out of the hat, and in this case, there's no hat and there's no magician, just a rabbit coming out. So this is this is not. But the theist can offer a rational explanation.

What about what about the problem of evil? Naturalists can't raise the problem of evil because they have no way of making sense of good and evil. They do raise it all the time, but it doesn't fit their worldview or evolution. Is it going to be able to account for for real evil in the world? Because all evolution can do, if I can do anything, is give us relativistic evil, what people think are evil because their genes have evolved this way to trick them so that they survive better. But evolution can never make an action like rape evil in itself. But that is the objection, isn't it? How could God allow evil out there? Things that are evil in themselves that requires objective evil? Naturalism can't provide objective evil. We can show on the big issues. Where did everything come from or why is there a problem of evil? We have the resources to make sense of those questions and to answer those questions. Naturalists can't even get off the ground."

Forbes Breaking News. "Do You Believe That Men Can Become Pregnant?": Dan Bishop Questions Pro-Choice House Witnesses." *YouTube*, 20 May 2022, www.youtube.com/watch?v=LudP6s_Is0k. Accessed 24 Oct. 2022.

Frederick Fyvie Bruce. *The New Testament Documents : Are They Reliable?* Eerdmans ; Downers Grove, Ill, 2003.

Friedrich Schleiermacher. *On Religion*. Franklin Classics, 2018.

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche. *Anti-Christ*. Cosimo Classics, 2019.

Frishberg, Hannah. "'It's a Cult': Ex-Hillsong Members Claim Church Demanded 'Slave Labor.'" *New York Post*, 23 Dec. 2020, nypost.com/2020/12/23/ex-hillsong-members-claim-church-is-cult-with-slave-labor/.

Garland, David E., et al. *Acts*. Baker Books, 2017.

Gecewicz, Claire. "New Age Beliefs Common among Both Religious and Nonreligious Americans." *Pew Research Center*, 1 Oct. 2018, www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/

2018/10/01/new-age-beliefs-common-among-both-religious-and-nonreligious-americans/.

Geisler, Norman. "The Apologetics of Jesus: Survey and Significance." *Journal of the International Society of Christian Apologetics*, vol. 11, The Theological Studies, 2018.

Geisler, Norman L. *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*. Crossway Books, 2021. 84 specific details documented by classical scholar and historian Colin Hemer. And these occur just in the last 16 chapters of the Book of Acts. They include the names of people, places, and other details that have been confirmed by history and archeology.

Likewise, the Gospel of John contains 59 confirmed details. None of them are the kind of detail someone would fabricate. And there is no other set of ancient manuscripts that contain this level of historically verifiable authenticity.

Gilliland, Douglas. *The Naturalist Philosophy of Stephen W. Hawking*. douglasgilliland.com/faith/seminary/GodTalkHawking.PDF. Accessed 23 Jan. 2023.

Glanzberg, Michael. "Truth." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, June 2006, plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2021/entries/truth/. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. Accessed 17 Dec. 2022. Truth is one of the central subjects in philosophy. It is also one of the largest. Truth has been a topic of discussion in its own right for thousands of years. Moreover, a huge variety of issues in philosophy relate to truth, either by relying on theses about truth, or implying theses about truth. It would be impossible to survey all there is to say about truth in any coherent way.

Gotquestions Editors. "How Many Prophecies Did Jesus Fulfill?" *GotQuestions.org*, 24 Jan. 2022, www.gotquestions.org/prophecies-of-Jesus.html. See list at source.

Gowan, Donald E. *When Man Becomes God*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1975.

Grasso, Christopher. "Skepticism and American Faith: Infidels, Converts, and Religious Doubt in the Early Nineteenth Century." *Journal of the Early Republic*, vol. 22, no. 3, 2002, p. 465, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3124812>. Accessed 9 Dec. 2019.

Gray, Freddy. "Why Progressives Can't Tolerate Christians." *The Spectator*, 10 May 2022, www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-progressive-war-on-christianity/. Accessed 24 June 2023.

Groothuis, Douglas R. *Truth Decay : Defending Christianity against the Challenges of Postmodernism*. IVP Books, an Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2000.

H Bavinck, et al. *Reformed Dogmatics / 1, Prolegomena / Herman Bavinck ; John Bolt, General Ed. ; John Vriend, Transl. [from the Dutch]*. Baker Academic, Cop, 2003.

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H. Wayne House, and Dennis W. Jowers. *Reasons for Our Hope*. B&H Publishing Group, 2011.

Another factor must be considered. Western culture is rapidly becoming biblically illiterate, so that quoting a text of Scripture is not immediately believed or even recognized. As Craig Hazen says:

In years past it was not unusual that a believer could quote the Bible or “preach the Word” and have a good chance of engendering respect and perhaps deep reflection on the part of the unbeliever. This was possible because the Bible still carried significant cultural authority. An unbeliever would be likely to consider its words because there was a widespread recognition that the Bible was at the foundation of western civilization and brought wise counsel on many issues—even if the whole text was not considered true or without error by the skeptical recipient. Those days, however, are gone. There is a better than ever chance today that a person will actually consider you immoral for quoting the Bible because the Bible is often viewed, inappropriately of course, as misogynist, racist, violent, religiously exclusive and the basis for much of the conflict in our world.⁶²

When Jesus spoke to a crowd of Jewish people, they shared belief in the Old Testament. When Peter spoke to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost, it was the same. When Paul spoke in the synagogues of the Jews, there was no debate on authority. However, when Paul came before pagans who had no knowledge of Scripture, he used another approach. He started from where they were and moved to the gospel..

Harris, Tom. “How Nirvana Works.” *HowStuffWorks*, 9 July 2002, science.howstuffworks.com/science-vs-myth/extrasensory-perceptions/nirvana3.htm. Accessed 29 Aug. 2023.

Hawking, Stephen. *Black Holes and Baby Universes*. Bantam, 2011.

Hawking, Stephen, and Leonard Mlodinow. *The Grand Design*. Random House Publishing Group, 2010. “Because there is a law such as gravity, the Universe can and will create itself from nothing. Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something rather than nothing, why the Universe exists, why we exist. It is not necessary to invoke God to ... set the Universe going.” .

- Hawley, J. "New Age." *Apologetics*, 30 Mar. 2016, www.namb.net/apologetics/resource/new-age/.
- Hemer, Colin J. *Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History*. Eisenbrauns, 2016.
- Heritage, Stuart. "Of Trigger Warnings, Safe Spaces and Snowflakes." *Men's Health*, 25 Oct. 2021, www.menshealth.com/uk/mental-strength/a38051454/do-you-speak-woke-a-glossary-of-the-terms-you-need-to-know/. Accessed 14 June 2023.
- Hick, John, and Paul F. Knitter. *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness : Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*. Wipf & Stock, 2005.
- Howe, Richard, and Norman Geisler. *The Religion of the Force*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016.
- Ignace Demaerel. *95 Theses on Humanism*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2018.
- Impact Apologetics. "Why We Know the New Testament Writers Told the Truth (DVD)." *Impact Apologetics*, 2011, impactapologetics.com/why-we-know-the-new-testament-writers-told-the-truth-dvd/. Accessed 18 May 2023.
- Imre Lakatos, et al. *For and against Method : Including Lakatos's Lectures on Scientific Method and the Lakatos-Feyerabend Correspondence*. University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Radical/Hyper Skepticism.
- Institute, Christian Research. "#Witchtok-Sorcery at Your Fingertips." *Christian Research Institute*, 17 June 2023, www.equip.org/articles/witchtok-sorcery-at-your-fingertips/. Accessed 24 Aug. 2023.
- McGrath, A., & McGrath, J. C. (2007). *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist Fundamentalism and the Denial of the Divine*. SPCK.
- Needham, J. P. (1985). An Overview Sound the Alarm—Threats of Humanism. In M. D. Curry (Ed.), *Humanism: Devotion to Man*. Florida College Bookstore. Humanism is defined as, "A philosophy that rejects supernaturalism (belief in God, JPN), regards man as a natural object, and asserts the essential dignity and worth of man and his capacity to achieve self-realization through the use of reason and scientific method—called also naturalistic humanism, scientific humanism. A religion subscribing to these beliefs; religious humanism."
- New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*. (1995). The Lockman Foundation.
- Petty, D. W., ed. (2008). *Challenges of Our Times: Some Answers for Young Christians*. Florida College Bookstore.

Purdy, R. A. (1998). Carl F. H. Henry. In W. A. Elwell (Ed.), *Handbook of Evangelical Theologians* (electronic ed., pp. 260–275). Baker Book House. The task of apologetics, therefore, is twofold: (1) to investigate and expose inconsistency in contrary positions, and (2) to demonstrate the consistency of the axioms of Christian revelation.

“Religion.” Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/religion>. Accessed 23 Jan. 2023.

Religious skepticism. (2023, March 15). In *Wikipedia*. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_skepticism)

Religious_skepticism Religious skepticism is a type of skepticism relating to religion. Religious skeptics question religious authority and are not necessarily anti-religious but skeptical of specific or all religious beliefs and/or practices. Socrates was one of the most prominent and first religious skeptics of whom there are records; he questioned the legitimacy of the beliefs of his time in the existence of the Greek gods. Religious skepticism is not the same as atheism or agnosticism, and some religious skeptics are deists (or theists who reject the prevailing organized religion they encounter, or even all organized religion). The word skeptic (sometimes sceptic) is derived from the middle French *sceptique* or the Latin *scepticus*, literally "sect of the sceptics". Its origin is in the Greek word *skeptikos*, meaning inquiring, which was used to refer to members of the Hellenistic philosophical school of Pyrrhonism, which doubted the possibility of knowledge.[1] As such, religious skepticism generally refers to doubting or questioning something about religion. Although, as noted by Schellenberg the term is sometimes more generally applied to anyone that has a negative view of religion.[2] The majority of skeptics are agnostics and atheists, but there are also a number of religious people that are skeptical of religion.[3] The religious are generally skeptical about claims of other religions, at least when the two denominations conflict concerning some stated belief. Some philosophers put forth the sheer diversity of religion as a justification for skepticism by theists and non-theists alike.[4] Theists are also generally skeptical of the claims put forth by atheists.[5]

Rogers, Kara. "meme". Encyclopedia Britannica, 12 May. 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/meme>. Accessed 22 May 2023.

Sproul, R. C. (2009). *Can I Trust the Bible?* (Vol. 2). Reformation Trust Publishing. 1. God, who is Himself truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself. 2. Holy Scripture, being God's

own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises. 3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning. 4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives. 5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the church.

Stephen Parrish. *God and Necessity A Defense of Classical Theism* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1997). 321 pp. Cloth. *Reviewed by Gary R. Habermas, Distinguished Professor of Apologetics and Philosophy, Liberty University.*

Strobel, L., & Mittelberg, M. (2018). *The case for christ daily moment of truth*. Zondervan.

Swain, Frank (2017). *The Universe Next Door: A Journey Through 55 Alternative Realities, Parallel Worlds and Possible Futures*. London: New Scientist. p. 12. The multiverse is a hypothetical group of multiple universes.[a] Together, these universes are presumed to comprise everything that exists: the entirety of space, time, matter, energy, information, and the physical laws and constants that describe them. The different universes within the multiverse are called "parallel universes", "other universes", "alternate universes", or "many worlds". One common assumption is that the multiverse is a "patchwork quilt of separate universes all bound by the same laws of physics."

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Velleius Paterculus." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/biography/Velleius-Paterculus.

---. "Millennials Turning to Astrology, and Q&A." *Christian Research Institute*, 26 Oct. 2018, www.equip.org/broadcasts/millennials-turning-to-astrology-and-qa/. Accessed 24 Aug. 2023.

---. "What Is Wrong with Astrology?" *Christian Research Institute*, 30 Jan. 2023, www.equip.org/video/what-is-wrong-with-astrology-2/. Accessed 24 Aug. 2023.

---. "What Is Y-O-G-A?" *Christian Research Institute*, 2 July 2023, www.equip.org/bible_answers/what-is-y-o-g-a/. Accessed 24 Aug. 2023.

International Labour Organization. “50 Million People Worldwide in Modern Slavery.”

Wwww.ilo.org, 12 Sept. 2022, www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_855019/lang--en/index.htm. Fifty million people were living in modern slavery in 2021, according to the latest Global Estimates of Modern Slavery . Of these people, 28 million were in forced labour and 22 million were trapped in forced marriage.

The number of people in modern slavery has risen significantly in the last five years. 10 million more people were in modern slavery in 2021 compared to 2016 global estimates. Women and children remain disproportionately vulnerable.

Modern slavery occurs in almost every country in the world, and cuts across ethnic, cultural and religious lines. More than half (52 per cent) of all forced labour and a quarter of all forced marriages can be found in upper-middle income or high-income countries.

J. Warner Wallace. *God's Crime Scene*. David C Cook, 2015. The origin of life requires the emergence of pre-biotic molecules (amino acids and nucleotide bases). Where could this have happened? Could life have originated from “inside the room” of the natural universe? If so, where, and is there a better explanation for the origin of life “outside the room” of the universe? .

James Porter Moreland. *The Recalcitrant Imago Dei : Human Persons and the Failure of Naturalism*. Scm Press, 2009.

Jessop, Thomas Edmund, and Mariano David Cranston. “David Hume.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 9 May 2023, www.britannica.com/biography/David-Hume. Accessed 9 May 2023. On Skepticism: Hume tried to describe how the mind works in acquiring what is called knowledge. He concluded that no theory of reality is possible; there can be no knowledge of anything beyond experience.

Johnson, Dru, et al. *The Universal Story : Genesis 1-11*. Lexham Press, 2018. In the book *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be*, Cornelius Plantinga describes the creation account as a picture of peace. Peace goes by the word shalom in the Bible, which he roughly translates “the way it's supposed to be.” After humanity's failure in Eden and Israel's repeated failures in history, the prophets looked forward to an age to come—an age not decimated by what Plantinga calls the “vandalism of shalom.” Human trafficking, addictions, government corruption, cycles of poverty, parental craving for successful children, and all the unsightly features of humanity trade in the vandalism of shalom.

How did we get to this shattered earth mired by broken humans? The calamity in Eden tells the disastrous nature of subverting creation that contorts our bodies, our relationships, and the earth against us (Gen 3:16–19). When Israel’s prophets dream of a “new age,” they envisage an age to come ringing with the voice and timbre of old Eden—the way things are supposed to be. Indeed, all of history in the Bible recalls and retells the story of Eden. Deuteronomy portrays Israel’s entrance into the Promised Land as Edenic fruitfulness (Deut 28:1–14). And the final age, which the apostle John is shown in visions, is described as a renewed Eden and Jerusalem combined (Rev 21:9–22:5). Is it possible that Eden, or something akin to it, is our destination in the age to come? If so, then we ought to understand the basics of what went wrong in the first Eden. .

Johnson, Philip E. “Evolution as Dogma: The Establishment of Naturalism | Phillip E. Johnson.” *First Things*, Oct. 1990, www.firstthings.com/article/1990/10/evolution-as-dogma-the-establishment-of-naturalism. Accessed 17 Apr. 2023. The theory in question is a theory of naturalistic evolution, which means that it absolutely rules out any miraculous or supernatural intervention at any point. Everything is conclusively presumed to have happened through purely material mechanisms that are in principle accessible to scientific investigation, whether they have yet been discovered or not.

Occasionally, a scientist discouraged by the consistent failure of theories purporting to explain some problem like the first appearance of life will suggest that perhaps supernatural creation is a tenable hypothesis in this one instance. Sophisticated naturalists instantly recoil with horror, because they know that there is no way to tell God when he has to stop. If God created the first organism, then how do we know he didn’t do the same thing to produce all those animal groups that appear so suddenly in the Cambrian rocks? Given the existence of a designer ready and willing to do the work, why should we suppose that random mutations and natural selection are responsible for such marvels of engineering as the eye and the wing?

Jones, Stanton L., and Mark A. Yarhouse. *Homosexuality*. InterVarsity Press, 2009.

Justice, Tristan. “Planned Parenthood Teaches Public School Sex Ed in 16 States.” *The Federalist*, 7 Oct. 2022, thefederalist.com/2022/10/07/trans-hormone-profitier-planned-parenthood-teaches-public-school-sex-ed-in-16-states-including-red-idaho/. Accessed 5 June 2023. While the curriculum is designed for high school students, the state reported to the federal Department of Health and Human Services that kids as young as 12 are

being presented with the material.

All seven of Idaho's health districts have either recommended or implemented the controversial curriculum in local schools, according to the Idaho Freedom Foundation. Districts have also begun to promote links to additional resources including Power to Decide, where kids can find where to get an abortion. Other resources include links to where students learn to hide their browsing history from parents and explore polyamory.

Kelly, Stewart E. *Truth Considered and Applied*. B&H Publishing Group, 2011. Truth itself is seen (by many postmoderns) as a fundamentally exclusive notion in that the truthfulness of X seems to entail the falsity of $\neg X$. As a result, so the argument goes, all those who affirm $\neg X$ (the $\sim X$ ers, so to speak) are marginalized, excluded from the discussion, and viewed as epistemically (and perhaps morally) deficient. Beard was correct when he wrote, "Each historian who writes history is the product of his age."³⁴² History in particular and the pursuit of truth in general are seen as "a form of legislation: it [philosophy] does not say how reality is, but seeks to control it by interpreting it."³⁴³ Not only truth, but tradition and authority are also called into question.³⁴⁴ In theology those who aim toward religious unity "need to minimize the elements that set Christianity apart, especially those which claim a unique status—much of traditional Christology, for instance, disappears."³⁴⁵ J. Hick, for example, makes clear that claims surrounding the divinity of Jesus must be jettisoned in favor of the tolerance and the pluralism we find in the world today..

---. *Understanding Postmodernism : A Christian Perspective*. Intervarsity Press, 2017.

Kenyon, Frederic G. *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011.

Kercheville, Brent. *Christian Fellowship - Romans 14:1-12*. westpalmbeachchurchofchrist.com/new-testament/romans/romans_14_1-12.html. Accessed 13 June 2023.

King, Rebekka. *The New Heretics*. NYU Press, 2023.

Kitchen, K. A. *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*. William B. Eerdmans, 2006.

Kolniak, Tina. "New Age Thinking Lured Me into Danger. Jesus Brought Relief."

ChristianityToday.com, 19 Apr. 2023, www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2023/mayjune/tina-kolniak-new-age-spiritual-danger-jesus.html. New Age spirituality feeds your ego by teaching that there is no right, no wrong, no objective truth—just a landscape of experiences that your soul goes through. It gives you false idols to worship, starting with yourself, teaching that you are always perfect where you are. It also teaches you to rely

on spiritual experiences rather than rationality.

Since coming to Jesus, I have shared the gospel despite ridicule or dismissal by self-professed “free thinkers” and educated intellectuals who believe they are beyond faith. I was once there, and my empathy runs deep for those who are lost in the same worldly delusions. My prayer is that the Holy Spirit would help them realize that New Age spirituality, with its egoistic focus and false promises of peace, is a dangerous replacement for our true savior, Jesus Christ..

Köstenberger, Andreas J., et al. *Truth Matters : Confident Faith in a Confusing World*. B & H Publishing Group, 2014.

Kosuth, Joseph. *One and Three Chairs*. Installation, 1965, www.moma.org/collection/works/81435. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Accessed 29 May 2023.

Kowalski, Dean A. *Classic Questions and Contemporary Film : An Introduction to Philosophy*. Wiley/ Blackwell, 2016. On Freewill: he doctrine of determinism flows logically and rationally from materialistic naturalism. Determinism is the view that every event that happens, including human choices, is caused to happen. Additionally, it means that what happens in the future could not have been different, given what has happened in the past.

CONCLUSION: If naturalism is incapable of accounting for 1) the creation of the universe and 2) our existence as free agents, then it is insufficient as a comprehensive worldview to explain the whole of reality.

Kragh, Helge. “Contemporary History of Cosmology and the Controversy over the Multiverse.” *Annals of Science*, vol. 66, no. 4, Oct. 2009, pp. 529–51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00033790903047725>. Some physicists say the multiverse is not a legitimate topic of scientific inquiry. During the last decade, ideas of multiple universes (the “multiverse”) based on anthropic reasoning have become very popular among cosmologists and theoretical physicists. This had led to a major debate within the scientific community of the epistemic standards of modern cosmology. Is the multiverse a scientific hypothesis, or is it rather a philosophical speculation disguised as science? .

Kuehl, Nancy L. *A Book of Evidence*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013.

LA Times Editor. “Letters to the Editor: Is Holocaust Amnesia behind Americans’ Declining Support for Israel?” *Los Angeles Times*, 28 May 2021, www.latimes.com/opinion/story/

2021-05-28/holocaust-survey-americans-israel. Accessed 31 May 2023. In contrast, a recent survey of 11,000 American adults under the age of 40 found that more than half thought the death toll of the Holocaust was under 2 million, nearly half could not name a single concentration camp, and 10% were unsure the Holocaust even happened or denied that it did.

Lakewood Church. "Lakewood Church." *Www.lakewoodchurch.com*, 2023, www.lakewoodchurch.com.

Leadership Ministries Worldwide. *Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible-KJV-John*. Leadership Ministries, 2017.

Lefford, Arthur. "The Influence of Emotional Subject Matter on Logical Reasoning." *The Journal of General Psychology*, vol. 34, no. 2, Apr. 1946, pp. 127–51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221309.1946.10544530>. "We are persuaded by reason, but we are moved by emotion."

Ninety percent of human decisions are made based on emotions. Humans use logic to justify their actions to themselves and others.

According to Arthur Lefford, author of "The Influence of Emotional Subject Matter on Logical Reading," people generally think their decisions are made based on facts. The study found that when "people agree with a particular message, they tend to perceive it as being more logical or rational. On the other hand, when people disagree with the message, they perceive it as an emotional plea."

Ninety-five percent of purchase decisions are subconscious, according to Gerald Zaltman, a Harvard Business School professor.

The most common emotional decision is reactive (subconscious) decision-making. It is typically very fast, as it takes at least 0.1 seconds for the rational cortex to start responding.

"Common emotional decisions may use some logic, but the main driving force is emotion, which either overrides logic or uses a pseudo-logic to support emotional choices (this is extremely common).

Another common use of emotion in the decision is to start with logic and then use emotion in the final choice."

According to the neuroscientist Antonio Damasio's study conducted on people with brain injuries that damaged the part of their brains where emotions are generated, these injuries affected not only their ability to feel but also their ability to make decisions, which

was seriously impaired. They were able to logically-describe what they should do, but with no rational way to decide, they were unable to make the decision..

Legrain, Leon. "THE GOLDEN BOATS of MARDUK and NABU in BABYLON." *The Museum Journal*, vol. XIV, no. IV, Dec. 1923, www.penn.museum/sites/journal/1116/. Accessed 1 July 2023.

Levy, M. "Prebiotic Synthesis of Adenine and Amino Acids under Europa-like Conditions." *Icarus*, vol. 145, no. 2, June 2000, pp. 609–13, <https://doi.org/10.1006/icar.2000.6365>.

Lewis, James R., and J. Gordon Melton. *Perspectives on the New Age*. State University of New York Press, 1992, pp. 28–51.

Lightfoot, Neil R. *How We Got the Bible*. Bakerbooks ; Oxford, 2010.

Ligonier Editorial. "What Is New Age Spirituality?" *Ligonier Ministries*, 3 July 2023, www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/field-guide-on-false-teaching-new-age-spirituality.

Lopez, Bernice. *Postmodernism in Europe*. Interview by Ed Rangel, 2021.

Lounsbury, Eric. *J. J. Blunt's Undesigned Scriptural Coincidences*. Xulon Press, 2005.

Mackey, John, and Raj Sisodia. *Conscious Capitalism : Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business*. Harvard Business Review Press, 2014.

ManSoft Technology. "Websters Dictionary 1828 - Webster's Dictionary 1828 - Love." *Websters Dictionary 1828*, 2022, webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/Love.

Martin, William, et al. "Hydrothermal Vents and the Origin of Life." *Nature Reviews Microbiology*, vol. 6, no. 11, Sept. 2008, pp. 805–14, <https://doi.org/10.1038/nrmicro1991>.

Hydrothermal vents can be found in the darkest depths of the ocean floors, typically on diverging continental plates, according to the Natural History Museum (opens in new tab). These vents erupt fluid which is superheated by the Earth's core as it passes up through the crust, before being ejected at the vents. During its journey through the crust it collects dissolved gases and minerals, such as carbon and hydrogen.

Mcdowell, Josh. *God Breathed : The Undeniable Power and Reliability of Scripture*. Shiloh Run Press, 2015.

McFarland, Alex, and Elmer L. Towns. *10 Questions Every Christian Must Answer*. B&H Publishing Group, 2011. Would a loving God really send people to hell? Can we really trust what the Bible says? Is Jesus really the only way to heaven?

Becoming a Christian does not mean that all of the questions about faith are instantly answered. In fact, more questions are likely to follow. However, not having knowledge

about certain issues can dampen your faith and rob you of the joy that comes from confidently sharing it with others.

McGrew, Lydia. *Hidden in Plain View : Undesigned Coincidence in the Gospels and Acts*. Deward Publishing, 2017.

McKinley, Jesse. "The Wisdom of the Ages, for Now Anyway." *The New York Times*, 23 Mar. 2008, www.nytimes.com/2008/03/23/fashion/23tolle.html?smid=pl-share. Accessed 1 Sept. 2023.

McShane, Julianne. "Whoopi Goldberg Faces Backlash after Repeating False Holocaust Comments." *NBC News*, 27 Dec. 2022, www.nbcnews.com/pop-culture/celebrity/whoopi-goldberg-faces-backlash-repeating-false-holocaust-comments-rcna63321. Whoopi Goldberg faces a fresh round of backlash after her latest historically inaccurate statement about the Holocaust, which she claimed "wasn't originally" about race in an interview with the U.K. newspaper *The Sunday Times*.

The controversy marks the second time this year that Goldberg, 67, has come under fire for what Jewish leaders and Holocaust experts say are inaccurate and offensive comments about the Nazi-sponsored mass murder of 6 million European Jews from 1933 to 1945.

Goldberg made the latest remarks in an interview published Saturday after the reporter said, "Nazis saw Jews as a race," referring to Goldberg's comments in January, when she claimed the Holocaust was "not about race."

"Yes, but that's the killer, isn't it?" Goldberg told *The Sunday Times* reporter. "The oppressor is telling you what you are. Why are you believing them? They're Nazis. Why believe what they're saying?"

"It wasn't originally" about race, Goldberg continued. "Remember who they were killing first. They were not killing racial; they were killing physical. They were killing people they considered to be mentally defective. And then they made this decision."

Merriam-Webster, Incorporated. "When Fictional Words Become Real." *Www.merriam-Webster.com*, edited by Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, 16 Dec. 2022, [www.merriam-](http://www.merriam-Webster.com)

webster.com/words-at-play/words-originating-from-fiction-novels. Accessed 16 Dec. 2022.

Merrill, Eugene H. *Kingdom of Priests*. Baker Books, 2008.

Michael Genhart, and Ken Min. *Love Is Love*. Little Pickle Press, an Imprint of Sourcebooks Jabberwocky, 2018. Review

“Simple and beautiful... Definitely a picture book I wish had been read to me when I was a little kid!” — I’m here. I’m queer. What the hell do I read?

"Love Is Love is a gentle yet straightforward story that shows that love is what makes a family. A great resource to discuss discrimination! " — Colours of Us

“Love Is Love makes plain the truth of its title for all kids and parents. Children and young adults still face harassment because they have LGBTQ parents. In accessible and gentle language, Love Is Love tells the simple story of these families...spoiler alert...they are just like every other kind of family. The point is no child should ever feel stigmatized for having LGBTQ parents and by embracing all families, we are elevating our own and proving that love is love.” — Kate Kendell, Esq., Executive Director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights

“Love is Love graciously calls into focus the fact that LGBTQ families are full of the same main ingredient as their peers’ families: love. In a day and age when we tend to focus on our differences, Love is Love is here to remind us that the love of family is a shared value across cultures and family structures, and it gives our children the language they need explain that.” — Amanda Hopping-Winn, Chief Program Officer, Family Equality Council

“A heartfelt affirmation of queer love... A strong message.” — Kirkus Reviews

About the Author

Dr. Michael Genhart has been a clinical psychologist in private practice in San Francisco and Marin for 25 years. He has experience working with children, adolescents, adults, couples and families, dealing with various facets of mental health and illness: anxiety, depression, relationship conflict, trauma, abuse, sexuality, work stress, bereavement and chronic health conditions. During this time, he has specialized in working with children

who have gay or lesbian parents, gay teens and coming out issues, same-sex relationships, and LGBTQ parenting matters. Additionally, he has supervised advanced psychology student interns through local doctoral training programs and been a consultant to colleagues particularly with regard to working with the LGBTQ population. He has also spent the last fifteen years visiting and speaking at local elementary, middle and high schools to engage students in conversations about LGBTQ issues. He is a consulting psychologist to The Campaign to Change Direction which aims to change the story about mental health, mental illness, and wellness in this country, and he is coauthoring a children's picture book on the topic.

Ken Min will tell you he was born on an ice floe and raised by a clan of penguins who read to him every night from the works of Margret & H.A. Rey, William Joyce, and DC Comics. He'll also say that he learned to paint by throwing his food at the walls. In reality he was born in Los Angeles and studied illustration at Art Center, College of Design. He has storyboarded for various commercials and animated TV shows such as *The PJs* and *Futurama*. His illustration work has been recognized numerous times by the Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators (SCBWI). In 2012, the first picture book he illustrated, *Hot, Hot Roti For Dada-Ji*, received the Picture Book Honor Award for Literature from the Asian Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA). These days, you will find Ken illustrating, storyboarding, writing, and dreaming up stories for children. Ken lives in Los Angeles..

Miller, Andrew. "Immigrant Store Owner Begs San Francisco for Help after Losing \$100K to Burglars: 'Worse than Afghanistan.'" *Fox News*, 1 June 2023, www.foxnews.com/politics/immigrant-store-owner-begs-san-francisco-for-help-after-losing-100k-to-burglars-worse-than-afghanistan. Accessed 5 June 2023. "At least in Afghanistan the Taliban will cut your hand off and people are afraid to commit such a crime," Zaid said, adding that he sees people stealing from nearby stores every day. .

Mineo, Liz. "Pondering Putting an End to Columbus Day, and a Look at What Could Follow." *Harvard Gazette*, 8 Oct. 2020, news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/10/pondering-putting-an-end-to-columbus-day-and-a-look-at-what-could-follow/. Recent responses to police shootings and killings of unarmed Black people in the U.S. have forced a national

reckoning over America's monstrous racial legacy. One consequence has been a radical rethinking of who we choose to publicly commemorate through statues, monuments, and celebrations. In this light, public observance of Columbus Day must end. For this nation's over 5 million American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian citizens, Columbus' voyages to the so-called New World inaugurated a long history of exploitation, enslavement, eradication, and erasure (and he himself initiated and sanctioned such actions).

Mohler, Albert. "One Word of Truth Will Outweigh the Whole World' —the Death of Alexander Solzhenitsyn - AlbertMohler.com." *Albertmohler.com*, 4 Aug. 2008, albertmohler.com/2008/08/04/one-word-of-truth-will-outweigh-the-whole-world-the-death-of-alexander-solzhenitsyn. Accessed 31 May 2023. "One word of truth shall outweigh the whole world." Alexander Solzhenitsyn cited that Russian proverb in his 1970 acceptance speech as he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. He did not deliver that speech in person, for he knew that if he left the Soviet Union he would never be allowed to return. Even after he was expelled from the Soviet Union in 1974, his great wish and absolute determination was to die in Russia, the land and people of his birth..

Mortenson, Dr. Terry. "The Religion of Naturalism." *Answers in Genesis*, 5 May 2017, answersingenesis.org/world-religions/religion-of-naturalism/. Naturalism, or philosophical naturalism, is one of the most popular religions in the world today, although most people don't recognize it as such because it has no obvious worship centers, clergy, liturgy, or holy book. Naturalism is known by other names: atheism, scientific materialism, and secular humanism. Atheists, secular humanists, and other advocates of naturalism will protest that their view is a religion, but would say it is the opposite of religion. So we need to begin by defining "religion." According to the 11th edition of Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, one definition of religion is "the service and worship of God or the supernatural." That obviously doesn't apply to atheism. But another given by that dictionary certainly does apply: "a cause, principle, or system of beliefs held to with ardor and faith." Many people who hold to naturalism are just as passionate about their belief as the most convinced Christians, Muslims, Hindus, or adherents of any other religion... So what are the beliefs of naturalism? The most fundamental belief from which all others flow is that nature or matter is all that exists. It has always existed or it came into existence from nothing. There is nothing outside or before nature, i.e., the material universe that is studied by modern science. There is no God and no supernatural.

Although nature has not always existed in its present form, what we see today is the result of time and chance and the laws of nature working on matter. Miracles are not possible, because they would be a violation of the laws of nature. Non-material things such as hopes, plans, behaviors, languages, logical inferences, etc., exist, but they are the result of and determined by material causes..

Moyer, Doy. *Mind Your Faith, 2nd Ed.* Moyer Press, 2017.

Mykytiuk, Lawrence. "30 People in the New Testament Confirmed." *Biblical Archaeology Society*, 17 Feb. 2022, www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/people-in-the-bible/new-testament-political-figures-the-evidence/.

Mykytiuk, Lawrence. "Did Jesus Exist? Searching for Evidence beyond the Bible." *The BAS Library*, 31 Aug. 2015, www.baslibrary.org/biblical-archaeology-review/41/1/8. Accessed 23 May 2023.

---. "New Testament Religious Figures Confirmed." *The BAS Library*, 27 Apr. 2021, www.baslibrary.org/biblical-archaeology-review/47/2/2. Accessed 23 May 2023.

Naturalism.org. "Frequently Asked Questions | Naturalism.org." *Www.naturalism.org*, 1988, www.naturalism.org/worldview-naturalism/faq. FREE WILL: What this must mean, from a naturalistic perspective, is that we could not have free will. We do not have the ability to think, act, and reason freely. As The Center for Naturalism states, if naturalism is true, then "We are not 'causally privileged' over the rest of nature, that is, we don't get to cause without being fully caused ourselves. To think that would be to hold a supernatural view of ourselves, the opposite of naturalism."

And by the way, even if not having free will did cause problems, that wouldn't change the fact that we don't have free will. In other words, just because you may not like the consequences of something doesn't mean it isn't true. According to naturalism, truth is independent of our desires. Fortunately, however, not having free will doesn't have any bad consequences, in fact it has some rather good consequences and implications, as we'll see below..

Nature.com Editors. "US Proposal for Defining Gender Has No Basis in Science." *Nature*, vol. 563, no. 7729, Oct. 2018, pp. 5–0, <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-018-07238-8>. Accessed 29 Oct. 2019.

NavPress - The Message, editor. *Holy Bible: The Message (the Bible in Contemporary Language)*. NavPress, 2005.

Neuman, Scott. "Megachurches Are Getting Even Bigger as Churches Close across the Country." *NPR*, 14 July 2023, www.npr.org/2023/07/14/1187460517/megachurches-growing-liquid-church.

Nhất Hạnh, Thích. *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching : Transforming Suffering into Peace, Joy & Liberation : The Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, and Other Basic Buddhist Teachings*. Harmony Books, 2015.

Norton, Michael Barnes. "Pluralism, Religious I Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy." *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2022, iep.utm.edu/rel-plur/.

Novello, Joseph R. *Bringing up Kids American Style*. A & W Publishers, 1981. Novello states, "If American adults seem to have lost their way, it is no wonder that our children are often bewildered, tense, and anxiously unsure of themselves" (26, p. 42). Further, says Novello, "For permissive, uncertain parents, everything is negotiable: There are no resolute values; kids are left to rediscover the wheel—if they don't get run over by it first" (26, p. 8)..

Olsteen, Joel. "Discover the Champion in You." *Trinity Broadcasting Network | TBN.org*, 3 May 2003, www.tbn.org/. Accessed 30 Aug. 2023.

Orwell, George. *1984 : A Novel ; Revised and Updated Bibliography*. New York, Ny New American Library [Ca, 2002. "The term newspeak was coined by George Orwell in his 1949 anti-utopian novel 1984. In Orwell's fictional totalitarian state, Newspeak was a language favored by the minions of Big Brother and, in Orwell's words, 'designed to diminish the range of thought.' Newspeak was characterized by the elimination or alteration of certain words, the substitution of one word for another, the interchangeability of parts of speech, and the creation of words for political purposes. The word has caught on in general use to refer to confusing or deceptive bureaucratic jargon."

: propagandistic language marked by euphemism, circumlocution, and the inversion of customary meanings

Newspeak, a language "designed to diminish the range of thought," in the novel 1984 (1949) by George Orwell

Osteen, Joel. *Your Best Life Now*. FaithWords, 2007. “If you don’t think you can have something good, then you never will. The barrier is in your mind. . . . Your own wrong thinking can keep you from God’s best. . . . To experience [God’s] immeasurable favor, you must rid yourself of that small-minded thinking and start expecting God’s blessings, start anticipating promotion and supernatural increase. You must conceive it in your heart before you can receive it. In other words, you must make increase in your own thinking, then God will bring those things to pass” (from *Your Best Life Now*, chapter 1).

Pallardy, Richard. “12 Greek Gods and Goddesses.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2019, www.britannica.com/list/12-greek-gods-and-goddesses. Accessed 23 June 2023.

Parker, Mark G. “Investor Relations - Stock Information, Events, Reports, Financial Information, Shareholder Information.” *The Walt Disney Company*, 31 Aug. 2023, thewaltdisneycompany.com/investor-relations/#reports.

Patheos. “New Age Origins, New Age History, New Age Beliefs.” *Patheos.com*, 2019, www.patheos.com/library/new-age. Accessed 24 Aug. 2023.

Pearce, Ben K. D., et al. “Origin of the RNA World: The Fate of Nucleobases in Warm Little Ponds.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, vol. 114, no. 43, Oct. 2017, pp. 11327–32, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1710339114>. Instead of developing from complex molecules such as RNA, life might have begun with smaller molecules interacting with each other in cycles of reactions. These might have been contained in simple capsules akin to cell membranes, and over time more complex molecules that performed these reactions better than the smaller ones could have evolved, scenarios dubbed “metabolism-first” models, as opposed to the “gene-first” model of the “RNA world” hypothesis..

Pecorino, Dr. Phillip. “Introduction to Philosophy Online Text Textbook.” *Www.qcc.cuny.edu*, Queensborough Community College, CUNY, 2001, www.qcc.cuny.edu/socialsciences/ppecorino/intro_text/default.htm. Accessed 9 May 2023. Skepticism is the belief that some or all human knowledge is impossible. Since even our best methods for learning about the world sometimes fall short of perfect certainty, skeptics argue, it is better to suspend belief than to rely on the dubitable products of reason. Classical skeptics include Pyrrho and Sextus Empiricus. In the modern era, Montaigne, Bayle, and Hume all advocated some form of skeptical philosophy. Fallibilism is a more moderate response to the lack of certainty.

Perry, Bob. "12 Reasons to Trust the New Testament." *Cross Examined*, 16 Sept. 2019, crossexamined.org/12-reasons-to-trust-the-new-testament/.

Piippo, John. *Deconstructing Progressive Christianity*. Independently Published, 2021. This is classic Piippo. Generally friendly and irenic, the author nevertheless takes a metaphorical sledgehammer to the faulty logic of "progressive Christianity." If you don't know John Piippo, he is a passionate follower of Jesus, a seasoned pastor, and a professor who just happens to hold a PhD in Philosophy. Drawing on his years of experience in philosophy, theology, and ministry, Piippo approaches his critical task of deconstructing trendy progressive Christianity with systemic logic, biblically-founded and historically-affirmed theology, illustrating it with personal anecdotes drawn from a lifetime of faithful service to Christ and his church. This is a timely and urgent apologetic for today that would be helpful for both Christians and skeptics.

Pizer, Ann. "Where Is Your Third Eye Located on the Body?" *Verywell Fit*, 1 Oct. 2021, www.verywellfit.com/what-is-the-third-eye-3566789. Accessed 2 Sept. 2023.

Plutarch. *Moralia, Vol. 2*. Harvard University Press, 1962. "No, but with full knowledge and understanding they themselves offered up their own children, and those who had no children would buy little ones from poor people and cut their throats as if they were so many lambs or young birds; meanwhile the mother stood by without a tear or moan; but should she utter a single moan or let fall a single tear, she had to forfeit the money, and her child was sacrificed nevertheless; and the whole area before the statue was filled with a loud noise of flutes and drums [so that] the cries of wailing should not reach the ears of the people" .

Raab, Dr. Diana. "How to Know Your Emotional Truth | Psychology Today." *Www.psychologytoday.com*, 27 Apr. 2019, www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-empowerment-diary/201904/how-know-your-emotional-truth#:~:text=Your%20emotional%20truth%20is%20what. Accessed 19 June 2023.

Ranji, Usha, et al. "Key Facts on Abortion in the United States." *Kaiser Health News*, 12 July 2022, www.kff.org/womens-health-policy/report/key-facts-on-abortion-in-the-united-states/. In their most recent national data, Guttmacher Institute reported 930,160 abortions in 2020 and a rate of 14.4 per 1,000 women. CDC reported 615,991 abortions in 2020 and a rate of 11.2 abortions per 1,000 women (excludes CA, DC, MD, NH).

Guttmacher's study showed an upward trend in abortion from 2017 to 2020 whereas CDC's report showed an increase in abortions from 2017 to 2019 followed by a slight decrease from 2019 to 2020.

Reader's Digest. "15 Common Words That Used to Mean Completely Different Things."

Reader's Digest, Reader's Digest, 7 Nov. 2022, www.rd.com/list/words-changed-meaning/. Accessed 14 Dec. 2022. From the book *The Bathroom Reader's Institute*.

Reilly, Patrick, and The New York Post. "Drag Marchers Spark Outrage with Chant at NYC Pride Event: 'We're Here, We're Queer and We're Coming for Your Children.'" *New York Post*, 25 June 2023, nypost.com/2023/06/24/drag-marchers-spark-outrage-with-chant-at-nyc-pride-event-were-here-were-queer-and-were-coming-for-your-children/. Accessed 1 July 2023.

René Pache. *The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture*. Sheffield Pub. Co, 1992.

Rensberger, Boyce. "Ebla Ruins Shed Light on Early Urban Man." *The New York Times*, 16 Jan. 1979, www.nytimes.com/1979/01/16/archives/ebla-ruins-shed-light-on-early-urban-man-resemblance-to-cities-of.html. Accessed 28 Apr. 2023.

Ressner, Jeffery. "The Secret of Success." *Time Magazine*, 2006, content.time.com/time/arts/article/0,8599,1573136,00.html. Accessed 31 Aug. 2023. "It's become the biggest selling item in the 30-year history of our store," says Harmony Rose Allor, a buyer at West Hollywood's popular metaphysical bookshop The Bodhi Tree. While DVDs do well to sell a few hundred copies there during the busy holiday season, *The Secret* has been selling in the thousands. All this for a low-budget documentary revolving around a centuries-old concept commonly known as The Law of Attraction"

Some call *The Secret* a 'transformative' message movie. Mixing the ancient conspiracy hoodoo of *The Da Vinci Code* with the psychic science of 2004's cult hit *What the Bleep Do We Know!?*, it interweaves computer graphics, historical recreations and interviews with 'experts' into a study of 'intention-manifestation' — the philosophy that contends our emotions and thoughts can actually influence real-world events. In other words: if you really, truly believe you can beat the lottery and visualize scratching off a winning ticket, you can do exactly that.

The secret to *The Secret*'s success is the effective way Byrne edits her interviews with 24 so-called 'teachers' — prosperity preachers, chiropractic healers, relationship gurus,

life coaches, motivational speakers and other empowerment hustlers — into one clear, cohesive voice. The teachers, many of whom have large audiences of their own, were also instrumental in promoting the DVD, touting it in e-mails to millions of their followers. 'The film delivers a timely message in a way that's accessible, whether or not you've ever explored this direction before,' says Hale Dwoskin, one of the two dozen featured teachers. Dwoskin, author of the personal growth guide *The Sedona Method*, believes 'the world is hurting and in turmoil. The distance between that trouble and our everyday lives has dissipated due to the widespread availability of cable news and the Internet. People are ready to find a way out beyond the normal paradigms we all live in.'

Critics of *The Secret*, and even some fans, are bothered by its obsession with using ancient wisdom to acquire material goods. In one segment, a kid who wants a red BMX bicycle cuts out a picture in a catalog, concentrates real hard, and is rewarded with the spiffy two-wheeler. *The Secret* "is like having the universe as your catalog," says Joe Vitale, who is called a "metaphysician" in the film but whose website bills him as "Mr. Fire" — a marketing consultant with the power to sway consumers with a "hypno-buying trance." "The get-rich-quick parts really bothered me," says Bodhi Tree buyer Harmony Allor. "It's my hope that people won't use creative visualization to obtain wealth for themselves, but in more positive, altruistic ways."

The film's backers say they deliberately aimed to make "wealth enhancement" a major element of the project. "We desired to hit the masses, and money is the number one thing on the masses' minds," says Bob Rainone, a former IBM salesman and telcom exec who now serves as Byrne's U.S. business partner. Wealth enhancement is also part of the *The Secret*'s business plan. Among the spinoff books expected in 2007 are *The Secret Workbook* and a collection of *The Secret Success Stories*. Byrne will also begin filming a sequel to *The Secret* in January, for an August release; Rainone says it will explore "the next step, the next level" in the process of achieving one's life goals. Meanwhile, the original DVD is about to be distributed in Europe and Asia; German, Spanish and Portuguese translations are nearly completed, with French, Japanese and Chinese to follow..

Rettner, Rachael. "More Americans Seek Alternative Medicine Therapies." *Livescience.com*, 30 May 2013, www.livescience.com/35431-alternative-medicine-treatments-popular-in-america-110201.html. Accessed 24 Aug. 2023.

Ritenbaugh, John W. "What the Bible Says about Skepticism." *Www.bibletools.org*, 1992, www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/topical.show/RTD/cgg/ID/6116/Skepticism.htm. Accessed 9 May 2023. By making the challenge the way Satan did, he first made them mildly skeptical about God's love, asking them, Does God really love you?

Second, he made it seem as though obedience to God was, in reality, servility. He made them begin to feel as though God's way was restrictive; that He was holding back good things from them. This thought naturally led them to think much more could be obtained from life if they just followed their body's and mind's natural inclinations.

Third, he played his trump card: Not only would they not die, but they would be in control, free to determine right and wrong. In short, they would be equal to God! Satan successfully brought them into a spirit of competition against God, resulting in the enmity described in Romans 8:7.

He indirectly lied about God Himself, and he directly lied about the penalty, giving them misinformation about the reward.

He did tell them the truth, that their eyes would be opened and that they would not immediately die. Their eyes were opened, and they now looked at things through the twisted perspective, seeing evil in everything. From innocence, they became ashamed of their nakedness. The effect began immediately.

Satan's lies, his counterfeits, and his devices are usually so subtle that only a trained mind can discern them. God teaches us to be able to see. He trains us to be able to spot the ploys, contrivances, and stratagems of our enemy so that we can overcome and

defeat him.

Rizzo, Vincent. "Really, the Bible Is a Reliable Source?" *The Life*, 2023, thelife.com/series/really-the-bible-is-a-reliable-source. Accessed 28 Apr. 2023.

Roberts, Mark D. *Can We Trust the Gospels?* Crossway, 2007.

Ross, Hugh. "Fine-Tuning for Life in the Universe." *Why the Universe Is the Way It Is, Reasons to Believe*, 2008, d4bge0zxcg5qba.cloudfront.net/files/compendium/compendium_part1.pdf. Accessed 20 Jan. 2023.

Sahakian, William S., and Mabel Lewis Sahakian. *Ideas of the Great Philosophers*. Barnes & Noble, 2005. The idea that something like morals, facts, or values could be true for you but not for me, is known as relativism. It is not a new idea.

PROTAGORAS: Truth is relative, it is only a matter of opinion.

SOCRATES: You mean that truth is mere subjective opinion?

PROTAGORAS: Exactly. What is true for you is true for you, and what is true for me, is true for me. Truth is subjective.

SOCRATES: Do you really mean that? That my opinion is true by virtue of it being my opinion?

PROTAGORAS: Indeed I do.

SOCRATES: My opinion is: Truth is absolute, not opinion, and that you, Mr Protagoras, are absolutely in error. Since this is my opinion, then you must grant that it is true according to your philosophy.

PROTAGORAS: You are quite correct, Socrates.

Santos, Jefferson Roberto Batista dos. "Construindo a Imagem Do Cristo: Uma Análise Das Cartas de Paulo Aos Coríntios, Aos Filipenses E Aos Romanos." *Licenciatura Em História*, vol. 2, no. 2, Aug. 2022, <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.18789.68324>.

Schaeffer, Francis A. *Pollution and the Death of Man*. Crossway, 2022.

Schmidt, Meagan. "8 Richest Pastors in America." *Www.beliefnet.com*, www.beliefnet.com/faiths/christianity/8-richest-pastors-in-america.aspx. Accessed 2 Jan. 2023.

Scott, Douglas. *IS JESUS of NAZARETH the PREDICTED MESSIAH? A HISTORICAL-EVIDENTIAL APPROACH to SPECIFIC OLD TESTAMENT MESSIANIC PROPHECIES and THEIR NEW TESTAMENT FULFILLMENTS*. 2017, digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2521&context=doctoral. Accessed 3 May 2022.

Searle, John R. *Mind*. Oxford University Press, 2004. FREEWILL: Consider the analogy of pool balls on a pool table. Once the cue ball is struck, this will determine all of the events that will occur on the table. Each ball's final resting place is determined by the laws of physics acting upon the particles of matter. Philosopher John Seale notes that in the same way "once the existence and trajectories of all the microparticles in the universe are set, then the entire physical history of the universe is determined by the behavior of the microparticles."

Segran, Elizabeth. "Did a Slave Make Your Sneakers? The Answer Is: Probably." *Fast Company*, Fast Company, 14 Dec. 2018, www.fastcompany.com/90279693/did-a-slave-make-your-sneakers-the-answer-is-probably.

Seiglie, Mario. "DNA: The Tiny Code That's Toppling Evolution." *United Church of God*, 21 May 2005, www.ucg.org/the-good-news/dna-the-tiny-code-thats-toppling-evolution. It is good to remember that, in spite of all the efforts of all the scientific laboratories around the world working over many decades, they have not been able to produce so much as a single human hair. How much more difficult is it to produce an entire body consisting of some 100 trillion cells!

Up to now, Darwinian evolutionists could try to counter their detractors with some possible explanations for the complexity of life. But now they have to face the information dilemma: How can meaningful, precise information be created by accident—by mutation and natural selection? None of these contain the mechanism of intelligence, a requirement for creating complex information such as that found in the genetic code.

SFGMC TV. "A Message from the Gay Community' Performed by the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus." *YouTube*, 1 July 2021, www.youtube.com/watch?v=ArOQF4kadHA. Accessed 2 Dec. 2021.

Shannon, Alfred. "Truth Does Not Fear Investigation." *Biblical Proof*, 13 July 2017, biblicalproof.wordpress.com/2017/07/13/truth-does-not-fear-investigation/. Accessed 10 Dec. 2022.

Sigman, Michael, and Contributor/Writer/editor/music publisher. "When Everyone Gets a Trophy, No One Wins." *HuffPost*, 18 Apr. 2012, www.huffpost.com/entry/when-everyone-gets-a-trop_b_1431319. <https://bit.ly/3YHEWB4>.

Sire, James W. *The Universe next Door : A Basic Worldview Catalog*. Intervarsity Press, 2009.

Skilton, Andrew. *Concise History of Buddhism*. Windhorse Publications, 2013.

Smith, Henry, and Director Of Development. *Canaanite Child Sacrifice, Abortion, and the Bible*. biblearchaeology.org/images/Child-Sacrifice-and-Abortion/4---Canaanite-Child-Sacrifice---Smith-90-125.pdf. The Aztecs and Mayans sacrificed both children and adults to their gods. Exposing an unwanted child to the elements or wild animals was a common practice throughout the Greco-Roman world. The Carthaginians of North Africa sacrificed their infants and children to pagan gods over a period of several centuries. Old Testament passages referring to child sacrifice are both numerous and dreadful. The Israelites, delivered from the bondage of Egypt by the mighty hand of Yahweh, the Lord of heaven and earth, did not simply engage in idolatry. They were guilty of adopting the ghastly Canaanite practice of child sacrifice. In some cases, they attempted to attach this practice to worship of the Lord (Ezek 23:39). In others, they rejected Yahweh worship altogether and fully turned themselves over to the idols of Canaan (2 Kgs 17:14-17). Kings Ahaz and Manasseh, the “shepherds of Israel,” even burned their own sons in the fires of sacrifice (2 Chr 28:2-3; 33:6). Certain Israelites stood by and did nothing (Lev 20:4-5). Despite manifold warnings and admonitions from the Lord (Deut 12:29-31; 18:10), the Israelites persisted. As a result, God brought dreadful judgment upon their entire nation (Jer 19:3b-6)..

Sosa, Ernest. *Epistemology*. 2nd ed., Wiley-Blackwell, 2018.

Stanford CIO Council, and People of Color in Technology. *Elimination of Harmful Language Initiative*. 2022, [s.wsj.net/public/resources/documents/stanfordlanguage.pdf](https://www.wsj.net/public/resources/documents/stanfordlanguage.pdf). Accessed 21 Dec. 2022.

Steinbrenner, Ethan. “Question: What Is the Difference between ‘Faith’ and ‘Blind Faith’?” *Bethany Lutheran*, 20 Sept. 2017, bethanylutheranfort.org/q-a/2017/9/20/question-what-is-the-difference-between-faith-and-blind-faith. It means to trust that something good will happen or that all will be well, even though there’s not a bit of evidence to back up that hope.

Stevenson, James. *A New Eusebius: Documents Illustrating the History of the Church to AD 337*. SPCK, 1987.

Strauss, Valerie. “Hiding in Plain Sight: The Adult Literacy Crisis.” *The Washington Post*, 1 Nov. 2016, www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2016/11/01/hiding-in-plain-sight-the-adult-literacy-crisis/.

Sutcliffe, Steven J., and Ingvild Saelid Gilhus. *New Age Spirituality*. Routledge, 2014.

Tagari Writer, Bobby. "The History of Self-Help Books – Tagari.com." *Www.tagari.com*, 9 Feb. 2022, www.tagari.com/how-many-self-help-books-have-been-published/. Accessed 21 Dec. 2022. * The self-help genre continues to grow in popularity, with an estimated 15,000 self-help books published in the United States each year.

*NPD Group reports that the self-help industry has grown rapidly in recent years: from 2013 to 2019, self-help book sales in the United States increased by 11 percent, reaching 18.6 million volumes.

*Book suggestions for self-help give readers a new perspective on habit building, emotional growth, or gaining a better understanding of the world.

*According to Bowker, self-help books are currently worth \$9.5 billion, with unit sales increasing at a compound annual growth rate of 11 percent since 2013. In 2019, self-help books sales surpassed 18 million, according to global information company The NPD Group.

Taylor, Dr. Martin. "The Historical Accuracy of Homer's Tales." *Mmtaylor.net*, 2000, mmtaylor.net/Holiday2000/Legends/Homer.html. Where do we get our information about what actually happened in past times? If somebody wrote an eyewitness report in a language we can understand, we can expect that there is some relation between what was written and what actually happened, even though most reports of significant events are strongly biased by the leanings of the teller, whether victor or vanquished. If several people wrote about it from different viewpoints, and the accounts more or less agree, then we can be reasonably sure that things happened the way the writings say at the points of agreement. But when there is no written record, we have to use forensic methods, like a detective investigating a murder.

The written record

The archaeological record

In the absence of textual records, the archeological record tells much, but not all.

Dr. Taylor's cv: <https://mmtaylor.net/prof.vita.html>

Dr. Taylor's publication list: <https://mmtaylor.net/publist.html>.

The Christian Chronicle. "Is Progressive Christianity Dangerous?" *The Christian Chronicle*, 1 Oct. 2018, christianchronicle.org/is-progressive-christianity-dangerous/. Take hell for example. When progressives define love to mean mere acceptance or even indulgence, they leave themselves unable to accept the many things Jesus says about hell. By doing this, they have misunderstood the true nature of Christian love and undermined the justice of God.

Whenever you hear people playing interpretive games with Scripture, arguing about "trajectories" and the like, you can be pretty sure that someone is trying to make the Christian faith align with their self-inspired sentimentalism..

The Editorial Board. "Opinion | the Stanford Guide to Acceptable Words." *Wall Street Journal*, 19 Dec. 2022, www.wsj.com/articles/the-stanford-guide-to-acceptable-words-elimination-of-harmful-language-initiative-11671489552. Accessed 21 Dec. 2022.

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "What Is Cultural Appropriation?" *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2022, www.britannica.com/story/what-is-cultural-appropriation.

"The Famous People: Naturalist." *Www.thefamouspeople.com*, www.thefamouspeople.com/naturalists.php. Accessed 23 Jan. 2023.

The National Center for Education Statistics . "National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL)." *Nces.ed.gov*, 2003, nces.ed.gov/naal/kf_demographics.asp#3.

The Veritas Forum. "Dawkins and Hawking | John Lennox." *Www.youtube.com*, Aug. 2021, www.youtube.com/watch?v=fECDvQP03w0. Accessed 6 Apr. 2023. Dawkins and Hawking | John Lennox

Speaker 1

Statements by scientists are not necessarily statements of science. When Carl Sagan began his famous television series with a statement like this, the cosmos is all there is to us that never shall be. That's a statement by a scientist. It's not a statement of science. It's a statement of his philosophical belief. But the trouble is that scientists in our contemporary world, they have such a priority that any scientist who makes a statement, people tend to think it's got the authority of science behind it.

00;00;40;14 - 00;01;04;18

Speaker 1

And we need to learn to distinguish. And Richard Feynman, who won the Nobel Prize for physics, made a marvelous statement that we need to listen to. I believe that the scientist looking at problems out of the field is just as dumb as the next guy. Now, that applies to me because, you see, I am not talking about pure mathematics.

00;01;04;18 - 00;01;33;27

Speaker 1

I hope you have realized that already. And in that sense, in order to have a dialog in public, we've got to go outside our fields. But there are certain things we've got to do if we do that, everybody has to do that. Otherwise, life would be very boring. But we've got to check. If I move outside my field and make a statement, then I've got to check that it's got some sort of authority.

00;01;33;27 - 00;01;57;29

Speaker 1

And I want to illustrate this by the title Richard Dawkins The God Delusion, which is a bestseller. The word delusion is a psychiatric term. Now, when I first read the book and I read it, many times in several languages in order to debate Richard, I, I noticed the word delusion is a psychiatric term. And Richard is not a psychiatrist.

00;01;59;21 - 00;02;26;15

Speaker 1

And that's very important to realize that he's making a statement that God is a delusion. And I'm not a psychiatrist either. So what do I do? I decide to read what psychiatrists say about this. And I discovered when I read the president of the Royal College of Psychiatrists at the time, Andrew Simms, that he doesn't regard God as a delusion at all.

00;02;27;07 - 00;02;56;05

Speaker 1

And Dawkins is ignoring the actual scientific, psychological, epidemiological studies of the connection, the correlation between belief in God and human well-being. Now, that's

very interesting because Dawkins is claiming to be a scientist when he says these things. And many people were quite angry, actually, in their writings when they discovered that his work on this is not scientific at all.

00;02;56;05 - 00;03;21;29

Speaker 1

It falls apart. Similarly, Stephen Hawking, the statement by a brilliant scientist, he was just ahead of me at Cambridge all those years ago. I remember him and he's light years ahead of me in his mathematical ability. But he said religion is a fairy story for those afraid of the dark. That's a statement by an astrophysicist, but it's not a statement of science.

00;03;21;29 - 00;03;47;06

Speaker 1

And I was asked to comment on it by one of the newspapers. I think, in which it was published in one of our daily newspapers in the UK. So I asked them, did they want a one liner? And they said, We'd love a one liner. I said, okay, atheism is a fairy story for those afraid of the light.

00;03;48;02 - 00;04;00;19

Speaker 1

Now you say you're clapping and you shouldn't really. You know why? Because the point I've been making is that these are statements by scientists, but they're not statements of science.

The White House - Joseph Biden Speech. "Remarks by President Biden and First Lady Jill Biden at Pride Celebration." *The White House*, 10 June 2023, www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/06/10/remarks-by-president-biden-and-first-lady-jill-biden-at-pride-celebration/. Accessed 20 June 2023.

Trend, Transgender. "Identity Politics and Sex Education in Schools." *Transgender Trend*, 21 Mar. 2023, www.transgendertrend.com/identity-politics-sex-education-schools/. Accessed 5 June 2023. The infiltration of gender identity politics into schools has snowballed over the last five years, under the guise of "trans rights" and promoted by

LGBT groups backed up by so-called Third Wave feminism.

LGBT and Third Wave feminism are part of a broader identity politics movement which also encompasses groups such as Black Lives Matter. Critical race theory, gender identity theory and Queer Theory are packaged together as one social justice movement that promotes a victim hierarchy based on degrees of oppression and degrees of privilege..

University of California Berkeley. "How Did Life Originate? - Understanding Evolution."

Understanding Evolution, UC Museum of Paleontology, 11 Oct. 2021, evolution.berkeley.edu/from-soup-to-cells-the-origin-of-life/how-did-life-originate/. Living things (even ancient organisms like bacteria) are enormously complex. However, all this complexity did not leap fully-formed from the primordial soup. Instead life almost certainly originated in a series of small steps, each building upon the complexity that evolved previously...

Vallerand, Robert J. *The Psychology of Passion : A Dualistic Model*. Oxford University Press, 2015.

Veness, Susan. *The Hidden Magic of Walt Disney World : Over 600 Secrets of the Magic Kingdom, Epcot, Disney's Hollywood Studios, and Animal Kingdom*. Adams Media, 2015.

Wadler, Matthew. "The Politically Correct Military: Stress Cards and the Correlation to Safe Spaces." *OpsLens.com*, 10 Nov. 2016, www.foxnews.com/us/the-politically-correct-military-stress-cards-and-the-correlation-to-safe-spaces. Accessed 1 June 2023. He finally bursts from the barracks shouting into the air how he couldn't handle the stress and he was done with camp and its stupid rules. Interwoven into this was the standard myriad of expletives that one would expect from such an outburst. As a former noncommissioned officer watching this all occur, there was no doubt that this young man would be sent home immediately. How could he lead soldiers; he couldn't even handle the stress from not having a towel? To my great distress, he was back in training within hours. He had been issued, by our cadre, a half sheet of paper which stated that if he felt too anxious he could walk away and have a "safe place" to reframe his thoughts and collect himself. At the end of the month he graduated from the course with the rest of us. Worse than that however, was when I saw him several years later as a military intelligence officer while at the National Training Center in California, he had been

promoted to captain and had troops under his direction.

Walker, W. L. *Christian Theism and a Spiritual Monism, Second Edition*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2021.

Wallace, J. Warner. *Cold-Case Christianity : A Homicide Detective Investigates the Claims of the Gospels*. David C Cook, 2013. I researched the writings of the generations of Christian students who followed the original New Testament authors. These Early Church Fathers sat at the feet of the apostles and learned from the apostolic eyewitness accounts. These secondary leaders then wrote letters and documents of their own, repeating the claims of their teachers. I focused on the work of Ignatius, Polycarp and Clement and isolated the content of their non-canonical writings to the early Church. What did they say about Jesus? Did they ever reference the writings of the New Testament? It turns out that the Early Church Fathers did, in fact, quote the scripture as it was handed down to them. But even if we can't reconstruct the entire New Testament (save 11 verses) as Dalrymple is often quoted to have said, the Early Church Fathers did confirm enough of the New Testament claims to validate and authenticate the writings of the apostles. From the non-canonical works of Ignatius and Polycarp (students of John) and the non-canonical work of Clement (a student of Paul) we can determine the following:

Jesus was Predicted by the Old Testament as Described in the New Testament

Jesus is Divine as Described in the New Testament

Jesus Taught His Disciples as Described in the New Testament

Jesus Worked Miracles as Described in the New Testament

Jesus was Born of a Virgin as Described in the New Testament

Jesus Lived, Ministered, Was Crucified and Died as Described in the New Testament.

Walsh, Matt. "A Trans EMT Challenges Matt Walsh to a Debate on Biology." *Www.youtube.com*, 5 Apr. 2023, youtu.be/VvQiMC0mvGg. Accessed 18 June 2023.

Warfield, B. B. (1892). *The Canon of the New Testament: How and When Formed*. American Sunday-School Union.

Warren, Roland C. "Why Pilate's 'What Is Truth?' Question to Jesus Is so Relevant Today."

Www.care-Net.org, 1 Aug. 2017, www.care-net.org/abundant-life-blog/why-pilates-what-is-truth-question-to-jesus-is-so-relevant-today. Accessed 9 May 2023.

Warwick, John. *History and Christianity*. Bethany House, 1986.

Weeks, Stuart. *Ecclesiastes and Scepticism*. T & T Clark International, 2012.

Weldon, John, and John Ankerberg. *VISUALIZATION: God-given Power or New Age Danger?*

(Part One) 1. www.equip.org/PDF/DN388-1.pdf. Accessed 24 Aug. 2023. Visualization is the use of mental concentration and directed imagery in the attempt to secure particular goals, whether physical, psychological, vocational, educational, or spiritual. Visualization attempts to program the mind to discover inner power and guidance. It is often used as a means to, or in conjunction with, altered states of consciousness (e.g., as produced by meditation), and is frequently used to develop psychic abilities or make contact with spirits. There are at least four identifiable types of visualization in our culture: academic, popular, occult, and Christian. Although there are boundaries separating these types, they are usually fairly fluid, and there is much potential for interrelationships between them. The practice of visualization, a directed form of mental imagery and concentration, is having broad and substantial impact in our culture.

---. *VISUALIZATION: God-given Power or New Age Danger? (Part Two)*. www.equip.org/PDF/DN388-2.pdf. Accessed 24 Aug. 2023. Although visualization can be adapted to almost any philosophy, in its popular usage it is loosely tied to a monistic or pantheistic world view that sees humans as divine and creators of their own reality. The practice itself enhances and perhaps even sets up the development of the monistic ("all is one") states of consciousness foundational to the New Age movement. Visualization is commonly used in occult practice, from casting spells to contacting "inner advisors" or spirit guides. As such, Scripture prohibits New Age visualization. Yet even alleged Christian forms of visualization are insufficiently critiqued, of dubious value, and subject to abuse..

Wells, David F. *Above All Earthly Pow'rs : Christ in a Postmodern World*. William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2006. It is quite apparent that the new spirituality is practicing what has become one of the norms of the postmodern world—that is, the belief that each person must be allowed one's own private space within which one has the freedom to define reality for oneself and set one's own rules. Violating this private space is, socially

speaking, intolerable. This habit, of course, is an expression of how our postmodern relativism is working itself out in this highly individualistic culture. But it is also speaking to the matter of truth. Truth in this postmodern and individualistic context becomes entirely private. What is true for one, therefore, may not be true for another; what is preference for one will not be preference for another, and the spirituality that works for this person may not work for that. And while this state of affairs bears all the marks of postmodern behaving and believing, it also makes a connection with the paganism of an earlier time when it was also thought that human nature yielded up intimations of “truth” about the supernatural world. And this habit was confronted by the biblical prophets who, in effect, declared that truth was to be thought of as having been revealed in the public domain rather than emerging from within.

Truth, as I have suggested, is what corresponds to reality. .

Wiersbe, Warren W. *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary*. David C Cook, 2007.

Wikipedia Contributors. “New Age.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 6 July 2019, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Age.

Wikipedia contributors. “Multiverse.” *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*. *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 5 Apr. 2023, en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Special:CiteThisPage&page=Multiverse&id=1148339102&wpFormIdentifier=titleform. Accessed 6 Apr. 2023. Multiple universes have been hypothesized in cosmology, physics, astronomy, religion, philosophy, transpersonal psychology, music, and all kinds of literature, particularly in science fiction, comic books and fantasy. In these contexts, parallel universes are also called “alternate universes”, “quantum universes”, “interpenetrating dimensions”, “parallel universes”, “parallel dimensions”, “parallel worlds”, “parallel realities”, “quantum realities”, “alternate realities”, “alternate timelines”, “alternate dimensions” and “dimensional planes”.

William Lane Craig. *A Reasonable Response : Answers to Tough Questions on God, Christianity, and the Bible*. Moody Publishers, 2013.

William Lane Craig, and J. P. Moreland. *The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. Dr. William Lane Craig, a leading Christian philosopher, concludes that the cause of the universe would have to match the following profile: personal (that is, able to choose to create), uncaused, beginningless, changeless, immaterial, timeless, spaceless, and enormously powerful.

Wilson, D. (2001). *Bound Only Once: The Failure of Open Theism*. Canon Press. Liberals in Drag

Wingfield, Mark. "John MacArthur Rallies Pastors to Preach against Government Bans on Conversion Therapy Jan. 16." *Baptist News Global*, 29 Dec. 2021, baptistnews.com/article/john-macarthur-rallies-pastors-to-preach-against-government-bans-on-conversion-therapy-jan-16/. Accessed 24 June 2023.

WKBW. "Understanding Pronouns: A Pride Guide to Using Inclusive Language." *WKBW 7 News Buffalo*, 4 June 2021, www.wkbw.com/news/local-news/buffalo-strong/understanding-pronouns-a-pride-guide-to-using-inclusive-language. Accessed 20 June 2023.

Wolfhart Pannenberg. *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*. T & T Clark, 2004. The result was that the idea of the social contract became fundamental for the political theory of the modern age. It provided a means of passing from the natural law conception of an original "state of nature" in which there was universal freedom and equality, to the present reality which is one of social inequality and dependence. The idea thus fulfilled a function similar to that of the doctrine of the fall in Christian natural law, since in the latter the fall marked the dividing line between the absolute natural law of the original state and the relative natural law of fallen humanity..

Word of Faith Channel. "You, Not God, Decide When to Die!" *Wwww.youtube.com*, 2009, www.youtube.com/watch?v=OKmxWfRhORI. Accessed 2 Jan. 2023. I'm going to say something that's going to know your lights off. God has the power to take life, but He can't. He's got the power to do it, but He won't. He's bound; He can't! He says, "Death and life is in the power of whose tongue?" Yours... You choose when you live, you choose when you die. Death and life is in he power of your tongue, not God's.."

Wright, Christopher J. H. *"Here Are Your Gods" : Faithful Discipleship in Idolatrous Times*. IVP Academic, an Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2020. When the Israelites exclaimed, "Here are your gods!" at the sight of the golden calf, they were attempting to hold on to the God of their history while fashioning idols for their own purposes. In today's Western world, plenty of shiny false gods still hold power—idols of prosperity, nationalism, and self-interest. Christians desperately need to name and expose these idols. We must retrieve the biblical emphasis on idolatry and apply it anew in our journey of following Jesus..

Yahoo Finance. "US Televangelist Appeals for Donations for \$54 Million Private Jet." *Finance.yahoo.com*, 30 May 2018, finance.yahoo.com/news/us-televangelist-appeals-donations-54-million-private-jet-161536591.html. Accessed 2 Jan. 2023. "Now some

people believe that preachers shouldn't have jets," he said in the video. "I really believe that preachers oughta have and go on every available voice, every available outlet to get this gospel preached to the world."

Duplantis said he needs the jet "so we can go anywhere in the world one stop" and he recounted a conversation he said he had with God about needing the plane.

"He said, 'Jesse, you wanna come up where I'm at?'" Duplantis said. "And I said, 'What do you mean?'"

"He said, 'I want you to believe in me for a Falcon 7X,'" Duplantis said.

"I can't live long enough to travel by car, or by ship, or by train, but I can do it by an airplane," he said.

"I really believe that if Jesus was physically on the Earth today he wouldn't be riding a donkey," he said. "He'd be in an airplane preaching the gospel all over the world."

Young, Scott, and Crissy Cochran. "the Influencers Podcast: Linguistic Theft: How Redefining Words Is Creating a Culture of Confusion (96) on Apple Podcasts." *Apple Podcasts*, 8 Aug. 2022, podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/linguistic-theft-how-redefining-words-is-creating-a/id1494592518?i=1000575489272. Accessed 16 Dec. 2022. Should the meaning of words we've understood for centuries change? New definitions for words such as truth, recession, gender, assault, woman, and freedom are being assigned in an increasingly divided, "cancel culture." Co-host Scott Young along with guest co-host Crissy Cochran discuss the issue of linguistic theft, the purposeful hijacking of words, changing definitions, and the use of those words as a tool of propaganda. If you've ever had your words used against you, struggle to find the right words to use in today's "woke" culture, or want to know how to help your kids identify buzz words, join the discussion to learn how to navigate today's cultural landscape with wisdom..

Zengal, Fred. *Aquarius Rising: Predawn of the New Age Book III: The Harmonic Convergence*. BookSurge Publishing, 2005.