

# How to Share Christ

REVIEW: Last week we began a series on How to Share Christ. Specifically we looked at the need for what we are terming “pre-evangelism.” If evangelism is sharing Christ and the Good News of the gospel with someone, pre-evangelism is learning to till up the soil of their heart so they become more receptive to the gospel.

INTRO: Today we are going to look at the process of listening to those we are speaking with, and get a better understanding of what we are listening for. To do so, we need to start with understanding what a worldview is.

## I. Worldview

A. The dictionary defines worldview as “a particular philosophy of life or conception of the world”

1. The authors of the dictionary may not realize this but they just gave us two different ideas of what a worldview is in one definition - but that is not all bad - in fact it is good
  - a) The first idea is that a worldview is the philosophy we hold to that taints or colors how we respond to the world as we encounter it
    - (1) I hold a biblical worldview, so the Bible will play the primary role in how I encounter the world, explain what I see, react to things, etc.
    - b) The second idea is a person’s concept of life or their experience of life help to make up their worldview
      - (1) So I see injustice in the world and that colors my view of life and helps create in some ways my world view
    - c) The fancy folk refer to these as the top down model (worldview paints our picture) or the bottom up model (that my experience creates my worldview)
  2. The reason the authors of the dictionary did well in their definition is that we actually hold to our worldview by both models, so the combination in the definition is completely appropriate

B. I start by talking about world views because everyone has one

1. It is essential to be able to identify a person’s worldview when we are talking with them, so we can help them see weaknesses in their worldview, and see the beauty of Christ
2. However, the process of identifying their worldview can be complicated by other factors
  - a) People are often drawn to their world views because they are attractive

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- (1) Some people choose their religions based on its attractiveness, or what it can do for them
  - (2) Some choose their worldview because of their lifestyle rather than any sense of truth
  - b) Many, in fact most people, do not have just one worldview
    - (1) Most mix and match their world views
    - (2) In fact, according to Barna's statistics from 2009, of those considered "born again Christians" only 19% held a Christian worldview
      - (a) That means that even in the church, people mix and match their world views
      - (b) That means that in here, if stats hold true, about 16-19 of us hold to a genuine biblical worldview, and everyone else has mixed and matched their worldview
    - (3) If mixing and matching has invaded the church, it makes it hard to witness to people in the world
  - c) Many in today's society are completely comfortable with contradictory beliefs
    - (1) In this mix and match society, people have picked up two or more beliefs that completely contradict each other
    - (2) For example, someone that has their belief in science, and that love is an evolutionary mechanism for the propagation of the species, probably does not really believe that it is when they are headed out for a date with the cutie they just met in their science class
- C. So what we are looking at is a world filled with people that need Jesus Christ (because in our biblical worldview, informed by God's Word, we believe Jesus when He said He is "THE way, THE truth, and THE life"), all of whom hold one or more world views, and our task is to tell them about the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ
- II. What we need is a way to help take apart any worldview, to examine it to see if it is true, so we can then engage the people we desire to share Jesus with
- A. The special term is "positive deconstruction" - taking it apart in a positive way to examine and rebuild stronger
  - B. How you identify a persons worldview will be in the conversation, and in the questions that you ask
    1. However, giving a name to every world view is less important than being able to listen for the areas in which they are off base

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2. For example, someone says that they have no problem with having sex with their girlfriend or boyfriend before marriage. You ask why. They reply that it is natural, therefore it is okay.
    - a) They are a person that has naturalism as part of their worldview
  3. Rather than get bogged down in every type of worldview we could name, I want to teach you a process for evaluating the strength or weakness of a worldview
- C. When we seek to analyze a worldview, there are really three questions to ask
1. Is in coherent? In other words, does it make sense and agree with itself
    - a) So, for example, if I told you that I do not believe in astrology because I am a Sagittarius, and Sagittarius's don't believe in astrology, would you believe me?
    - b) My first girlfriend was trying to convey that she did not trust someone, but here is what she said, "I don't trust him as far as I could throw him, and I could throw him really far!" Does she trust him or not? According to her analogy, she trusts him - it was self contradicting
  2. The second question we have to ask as we examine a worldview is does it correspond to reality?
    - a) In other words, do the claims of truth prove themselves in reality?
    - b) So for example: I love watching the History channel. I get a kick out of that ancient aliens show
      - (1) Mostly because I have to laugh at the lunacy of the guys
      - (2) They would be a great example of this second question.
      - (3) They believe that aliens came down and built this, and did that, and so on, mostly because they cannot explain why a particular thing happened so it must be aliens
      - (4) The problem is, that in all of this time, they have no evidence to back up their claim - it does not correspond to reality
  3. The final question to ask is does it work?
    - a) In other words, error will fall apart, truth will be able to function
    - b) So let's consider our childhood on this one
      - (1) I have no idea what it was like to grow up as a little girl, so this will be a little boy illustration
      - (2) When most of us little boys were growing up, whether we were playing Star Wars, or cops and robbers, or being an Army Ranger, we were convinced that the weapon we had was real
        - (a) Yes, my mother let me play with toy cap guns and I turned out alright!

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- (b) But regardless what we as children believed about the toy gun, does not change the reality of the situation
- (c) If we had tried to stop a robber from coming in our house, our error, and the fact that the gun would not work in a real situation is going to get us killed
- c) Same thing is true with the ideas we trust in - do they work in reality?
- D. After we ask those three questions, the answers will help us to do two things
  - 1. First is affirm the truth
    - a) Now, for some strange reason, the idea that someone in another religion, or with a different worldview might actually be right and possess truth about something seems to bother us as Christians
      - (1) We seem to think in absolutes in this one, and we have the corner market on truth
      - (2) The fact is that we need to affirm the fact that they are right
        - (a) If we don't, we risk not being heard because we come off as biased, bigoted jerks
        - (b) If we do, we then are opening doors that show we are seeking truth, wherever it is found
        - (c) The fact is, all truth is God's truth - if a Buddhist gets something right, GREAT!
    - b) Another reason we most affirm truth wherever it is found is because it keeps us from error
      - (1) Christians through the centuries have always been activists
        - (a) William Wilberforce, the medical field, and many other areas in which we took the lead role
      - (2) However, at the beginning of the 20th century the church lost sight of social justice because of an over-reaction to theological liberalism
        - (a) Theological liberalism decreased the value of the Bible and said that social justice was the main thing to focus on
        - (b) So many Christians who still believed the Bible and loved it dearly threw the baby out with the bath water and did not get involved in social justice issues
      - (3) If we had kept our eyes on embracing truth, we would have held onto social justice AND the Bible at the same time
        - (a) Which is what is taking place today in Christianity
        - (b) And it is the reason we cancel church three times a year for Community Sunday
  - 2. The second thing those questions help us to do is discover the error

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- a) Yes, other world views contain truth, but they also contain error
  - b) If Jesus' exclusive truth claims are true (which they are) then other world views must contain some errors as well
- III. I have told you that I want to make this practical, so what I want to do is take a worldview and walk through the questions, and look for the things that are true, as well as the things that are false. To do so I picked a very widely held worldview called relativism
- A. Chances are high you will not get someone walking up to you saying, "Hi, my name is Micah, and I'm a relativist."
    - 1. In fact, most people are unaware of their own worldview
    - 2. However, if you have ever heard or made statements like this, your worldview is at least in part relativistic
      - a) "It may be true for you, but it's not true for me."
      - b) "Don't tell me that's wrong. It might be wrong for you, but its not wrong for me."
      - c) "Christians shouldn't try to convert people. If people are happy with what they believe, leave them alone."
      - d) All of these statements have relativism at their core
  - B. So what is relativism?
    - 1. It is the belief that there are no absolutes - no absolute truth, no absolute standard of right or wrong, no absolutes at all.
    - 2. I chose relativism because it is so widespread that most people just accept it as true
  - C. So, let's apply the three questions to relativism
    - 1. Is it coherent? Does it make sense? Does it contradict itself?
      - a) You all should know the answer to this one, because I point it out often
      - b) When someone says, "There is no such thing as absolute truth." I so desperately want to ask, "And you believe that absolutely?"
        - (1) The statement itself contradicts itself
        - (2) It is like saying, "It is absolutely true that there are no absolutes!"
      - c) But the other problem with relativism about its coherence is that it denies a bedrock principle of logic known as the law of non-contradiction
        - (1) The law states something cannot be true and untrue at the same time
        - (2) So for example I cannot say this podium is make of wood and this podium is not made of wood.
          - (a) They are two exclusive truths made about the same thing
          - (b) One is true and the other false or they are both false

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- d) So for relativism, we have to throw that law out the window because in this system of thought something can be true and not true at the same time (It's true for you but not for me)
- 2. Does relativism correspond to reality?
  - a) There are some ways in which this can be true
    - (1) If I want to start a fight right here and now in our church I can say that U of M is the best college ever
      - (a) Now that may be true for me, because I or my family had positive experiences there, etc.
      - (b) That may not be true for you, because you went there for a year and hated it, or were raised in a Michigan State only house and bleed green
    - (2) Or let's consider an area that is more important than college football (and I understand some of you don't understand that statement) the area of ethics
      - (a) All of us have been raised to not steal or take what is not ours
      - (b) You are in a gas station, a person comes in to rob the place, you have the perfect chance to steal the gun from the robber - do you steal or not steal?
        - i) Of course you steal
        - ii) In this case, circumstances matter
    - (3) In fact, Rahab lied to protect the spies in the OT - she was later called one of the heroes of the faith in Hebrews
    - (4) We would be foolish to ignore the truths in relativism
      - (a) To say that everything is absolute at all times and circumstances and context does not matter would make us dogmatic hypocrites
  - b) But in the real world, the statement that everything is relative just does not pan out
    - (1) There are many things that are true for all people in all places
    - (2) For example: I take you next door, and we walk upstairs, into the back porch area, remove a window and walk out on the roof. I tell you that gravity is true for me, but it may not be true for you and then I push...what do you think will happen?
      - (a) Well, if you survive the fall, I would probably be brought up on charges for attempted murder
      - (b) No amount of my pleading that relativism is true will help my case - because gravity is no respecter of persons - it is true for all
    - (3) Another example: "God exists for you but not for me"

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- (a) So if we applied this to the real world, that wall exists for me but not for you - so would you then run headlong at it, expecting to pass right through?
  - (b) And how is a person's existence established by whether we believe in them or not
    - i) I don't believe that Eric exists - I can act that way, treat him that way
    - ii) But does my lack of belief change his existence at all?
  - (4) One other to help you see a difference between relativism's truth and error
    - (a) I can tell you that the Chicago Bears are the best football team and all of you should cheer for them (that is true for me - maybe not for you)
    - (b) But if I say that the Bears will win the Superbowl this season - that is not a statement that is true for me and not for you - it is either true or not true
  - c) In the real world, relativism has many holes in it
3. Finally does relativism work?
- a) There are some good things about relativism
    - (1) It sees the difference between truth expressed and truth experienced
    - (2) A man can tell his wife "I love you" - that is truth expressed
      - (a) But it is her experience of that statement that proves it real
      - (b) But you must have both
        - i) He could say "I love you" as much as he wants, but if it is a lie, she is would never be able to experience that truth in real life
  - b) One of the authors I read gave this as an example of where relativism fails to work
    - (1) He talked with a HS principal that said he did not believe in absolute truth and that he did not believe in the law of non-contradiction
    - (2) The author left the discussion wondering how the principal graded papers
      - (a) Would a student really say, "Well the capital of Texas may be Austin for you, but for me it is Dallas."
      - (b) The mere acting of grading a paper as right or wrong disproves the principal's beliefs
  - c) One of my favorite examples from ethics is Hitler

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- (1) Would anyone seriously say, “Well killing 6 million Jews would be wrong for me, but for Hitler that was okay.”
- (2) Would anyone say Hitler was right? And we have seen what happens when anyone even hints at it in our day - the media has a firestorm (and in some ways, rightly so)

- D. So I hope you are beginning to see the process for evaluating world views
1. We ask these three main questions to find both the truths contained in someone’s worldview, and the errors
  2. When we find those things, then we can begin to talk with them about their beliefs
  3. But all of this starts with listening to what they say

## IV. Does this sound like a lot of work?

A. I’m sure it does - especially if you have not studied world views before

B. My job as your Pastor is to help equip you for ministry

1. One of those ministries is talking with the people in your life about Christ

C. Is someone’s salvation worth the extra effort we might have to put in to help them see Christ more clearly - without a doubt

D. Do you have to understand all world views or even every step of this process?

1. No

2. If you understand one thing that helps loosen someone’s hold on a wrong worldview, you have helped that person come closer to Christ

3. The fact is, if your desire is to be used by God, God will use you no matter how much you know

a) That does not excuse you from learning

b) But that should help you realize that if your goal is to glorify God by pointing people to Christ, God will use you