

Biblical Christian Worldview

Assignments to enhance reading comprehension

Text: *Total Truth*, by Nancy Pearcey

FOREWARD

1. According to Phillip E. Johnson, why is it important to understand worldview?
2. Explain what Johnson means by “verifiable frame of reference.”
3. Why is worldview analysis a key piece of armor in the Christian defense system?
4. Johnson states that “change in conduct is brought about by changes in worldviews.” Explain worldview analysis in terms of Matthew 7:24-27.

INTRODUCTION

1. Select several phrases, words, or images that help define worldview.
2. Briefly explain the connection between redemption, worldview, and culture.
3. Pearcey quotes Charles Spurgeon, “The gospel is like a caged lion. It does not need to be defended, it just needs to be let out of its cage.” According to Pearcey, what is the cage that holds captive the power of the gospel?
4. What was the Scopes trial?
5. Explain the term fundamentalism.
6. Explain the term neo-evangelicals.
7. Explain the term political activism.
8. Explain “politics is downstream from culture.”
9. Explain why Pearcey believes children raised in Christian homes tend to lose their faith while attending college/university.
10. Explain why “heart religion” and “brain religion” cannot be separated.
11. Define “sacred-secular dichotomy.”
12. Explain why if we do not recognize and expose the “fact/value” split, then Biblical Christianity will be “delegitimized” and “silent” in all spheres of life (except maybe the local church).
13. Explain “holistic view of total truth.”
14. Briefly explain the difference between the Biblical view of human nature over against the Marxist, Freudian and behavioristic view of human nature.
15. Define the German word *Weltanschauung*.
16. Explain the critical importance of worldview thinking *and* living in terms of Luke 10:27 and II Corinthians 10:5.
17. Why is the Creation/Fall/Redemption grid foundational for worldview thinking *and* living?

SECTION 1: WHAT’S IN A WORLDVIEW?

CHAPTER 1: BREAKING OUT OF THE GRID

1. Explain the difference between Christianity seen as “religious truth” and Christianity seen as *total* truth.
2. Explain what Harry Blamires meant by “there is no longer a Christian mind.”
3. What is impact does the revelation of Christ as *logos* (John 1:1-4) have on one’s view of the universe?
4. Explain how Biblical Christianity forms a “lens for interpreting the world.”
5. Comment on this remark by Sidney Mead, “This internalization or privatization of religion is one of the most momentous changes that has ever taken place in Christendom.”
6. Comment on this question by Dorothy Sayers, “How can anyone remain interested in a religion which seems to have no concern with nine-tenths of his life?”
7. Define the Biblical function of a Christian school teacher.
8. Comment on Psalm 119:105 in reference to so-called “neutral” knowledge and spheres.

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9. Explain the basic thrust of the Enlightenment.
10. Explain how one can “be a sincere Christian and yet promote a philosophy that is certainly *not* Christian.”
11. Briefly explain Augustine’s understanding of the “City of God” and the “City of Man.”
12. Explain the difference between “reason as a tool” and “reason as divine.”
13. Explain what “reasoning from premises” means.
14. What does Pearcey mean by saying “faith is a universal function.”
15. Both Christians and non-Christians agree on many “surface” truths (e.g., $2 + 2 = 4$). They disagree on the “root” premises that undergird or justify these surface agreements. Explain.
16. Explain Pearcey’s proposition: “If Christians do not *consciously* develop a Biblical approach to any subject, then we will *unconsciously* absorb some other philosophical approach.”
17. Explain the Biblical diagnostic “tools of analysis” needed to begin reinterpretation of the whole of life including knowledge and institutions. Include a brief summary of the Creation/Fall/Redemption grid.
18. Explain what the phrase “cultural mandate” means.
19. What did Martin Luther mean by saying that our occupations are God’s “masks”?
20. Explain why worldview analysis is not merely an abstract, academic exercise.
21. Comment on Pearcey’s assertion: “Those in relationship with the Creator should be the most creative of all. By creatively developing a Biblical approach to their subject area, believers may even transform an entire discipline.”

CHAPTER 2: REDISCOVERING JOY

1. Explain how the intent of the gospel is to “leaven” the whole of life.
2. Explain why Pearcey makes the follow assertion: “Though Christianity is thriving in modern culture, it is *at the expense* of being ever more firmly relegated to the private sphere.”
3. Explain what it means to be a Christian “schizophrenic.”
4. Briefly explain Plato’s dualistic philosophy. Comment on the implication of Plato’s view of matter and the Biblical response.
5. Explain the positive and negative thrusts of Augustine’s theology.
6. Explain the so-called “double-truth theory.”
7. Explain how Aquinas resolved and, at the same time, did not resolve the double-truth theory.
8. Explain the thrust of the Reformation in resolving the Aquinian conflict of *donum superadditum*.
9. Explain how the Reformation distinctive of the “priesthood of all believers” exposed the error and practice of medieval spiritual elitism.
10. How did the Reformation fail in successfully rebutting the “nature/grace dualism” embraced by Aquinas?
11. Define “worldliness” Biblically. Support by Scripture.
12. Explain the difference and implications between Plato’s explanation of the rational order of creation and Calvin’s explanation of the same.
13. In terms of the impact of the Fall upon man, creation and culture, explain the Reformation distinction between *structure* and *direction*.
14. Why must God’s redemption in Christ be understood in *holistic* terms?
15. Cite two examples of how Christians can become imbalanced in their understanding of the Creation/Fall/Redemption grid.
16. Explain Pearcey’s assertion that if Christians embrace the nature/grace dualism of Aquinas and thereby relegate Christianity to the upper story of “privatized devotion,” then Christians will abandon the world of ideas and institutions to the secularists.

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CHAPTER 3: KEEPING RELIGION IN ITS PLACE

1. From your reading so far, unpack and explain this phrase as related to knowledge and institutions: “the myth of neutrality.”
2. Explain in what ways medieval culture was “holistic.”
3. Explain the “upper story” and “lower story” image that Pearcey enjoins in her discussion. Demonstrate how the message of Scripture speaks to both levels.
4. Faith and reason are often pitted against each other. Resolve this battle from a Scriptural perspective.
5. Explain the connection between the Enlightenment and Romanticism.
6. Explain the dualism of Descartes.
7. Explain the dualism of Kant.
8. Explain why the rise of Darwinism cemented the divide between fact and value.
9. Explain why, when a culture views values as merely socially constructed meanings, anarchy is the final result.
10. “Science constitutes facts while morality is about values.” Critique this statement.
11. Explain what Pearcey means by the postmodern dilemma that can be summed up by saying that “ethics depends on the *reality* that materialistic science has declared to be *unreal*.”
12. Explain what Pearcey means by a secular “leap of faith.”
13. “A worldview must comport with reality.” Explain this statement.
14. What is the crucial flaw in theological liberalism?
15. Explain the modern day concept of “spirituality.”
16. Explain some key issues that Christians must understand and apply to be effective evangelists in modern day culture.
17. What was the ideational breakthrough that resulted in the conversion of C. S. Lewis?
18. Explain James 1:27 in terms of worldview analysis.

CHAPTER 4: SURVIVING THE SPIRITUAL WASTELAND

1. Explain how the Apostle Paul applied the command of I Peter 3:15 in his defense of Christianity in Acts 17.
2. What types of questions should be asked and answered in the construction of a Biblical Christian worldview?
3. Explain the importance of education and the family in the battle for the shaping of the minds of children.
4. Why must the Christian mind be focused on thinking long-term or “generationally”? Cite Scripture to support your answer.
5. Explain how the Biblical Christian doctrine of the Trinity resolves the problem of “unity and diversity.” Cite several examples of the application of this resolution.
6. Explain the concept of “sphere sovereignty.”
7. Why is Marxism, even with the collapse of Communist Russia, still impacting the thoughts and actions of many?
8. Provide Biblical Christian worldview analysis for any two of the following philosophies: (1) Marxism, (2) Romanticism (Rousseauianism), (3) Sexual “liberation,” (4) New Age Pantheism.

SECTION 2: STARTING AT THE BEGINNING

CHAPTER 5: DARWIN MEETS THE BERENSTAIN BEARS

1. Explain why Darwinism necessitates theological dogmas or philosophical absolutes to be mere myths.
2. Explain why the image of “warfare between science and religion” became popular beginning in the late 19th century.
3. What does Daniel Dennet mean by referring to Darwinism as “universal acid?”

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4. Explain the Darwinist propaganda behind any two of the following “evidences” for evolution: (1) Finches on the Galapagos Islands, (2) Fruit flies, (3) Peppered moths, (4) Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny.
5. Explain the phrase “baloney detector.”
6. Explain how extrapolation is a key to Darwinism.
7. Explain why Darwinists invented the theory call punctuated equilibrium.
8. Explain how proponents of Darwinism often commit the logical fallacy of equivocation.
9. Explain what naturalism is and why naturalism is the basic presuppositional commitment of Darwinists.
10. Explain how Darwinists reinterpret facts to fit their theories.
11. Explain the difference between naturalism and materialism.
12. Explain how Darwinists rule out the doctrine of creation by definition.
13. Defend this thesis, “Evolution is a religion.”
14. In terms of redeeming culture, why is it primary for Christians to expose the fallacy of naturalism instead of “in-fighting”?
15. Explain the difference between positing that the universe is a *closed* system of cause and effect instead of an *open* system of cause and effect?
16. Why is it important that we defend the Christian faith as *objective* (or cognitive) truth and not merely as *subjective* (or non-cognitive) truth?
17. Critique this statement: Religion is based on faith (values) while science is based upon evidence or reason (facts).

CHAPTER 6: THE SCIENCE OF COMMON SENSE

1. Explain how design theory is a formulation of ordinary common sense (or intuition). Cite several examples of this formulation in fields other than science.
2. Explain how both Darwin and his contemporary cheerleader, Richard Dawkins, explain away real design and real purpose in the created order of things.
3. Explain the recent evidence for marks of design in any two of the following three fields: (1) Biochemistry, (2) Cosmology, (3) Biological information.
4. Explain *irreducible complexity*.
5. Explain how scientists turn to irrational conjectures in their attempt to explain away the amazing, intricate, and precise interconnectedness of the cosmos.
6. Explain the difference between chance, law, and design. Cite examples to demonstrate the differences.
7. What is *specified complexity*?
8. What is theistic evolution?
9. Explain why Darwin believed that theistic evolution was no different in principle from direct creation.
10. Explain why Darwin’s commitment to chance and law cannot account for the specified complexity of DNA codes.
11. What is the true source of the information (that reveals superior wisdom) that the interconnections of science unfold layer by layer?
12. Explain what Pearcey means by Christian relativism.
13. When one defends Christianity in the public sphere, why is it dangerous to define the faith in terms of noncognitive experience *only*?

CHAPTER 7: TODAY BIOLOGY, TOMORROW THE WORLD

1. Explain why, according to Schaeffer, that Christians are not more effective in the “public square.”
2. Explain the naturalistic definition of science.
3. Explain the naturalistic definition of religion.
4. Cite examples of how evolution and evolutionary ethics are part of the “same package.”

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5. Explain why “helping an elderly lady across the street” and “pushing an elderly lady into the street” are both valid ethical actions according to evolutionary theory.
6. Explain why evolutionary relativism contradicts the claim that Darwinism is objective truth.
7. Can a person honestly live by Darwinian Theory? Cite examples where the theory does not comport with reality.
8. According to Rousas J. Rushdoony, “The unbeliever is thus able to think and work only on the basis of a practical reason which presupposes the Christian frame of things.... On his own premises, he can know nothing; on borrowed premises, he is able to think and work, but for all his results, he remains in the paradoxical position of the cattle rustler.... He has no knowledge on the basis of his own principles, he has valid knowledge only as a thief possesses stolen goods.”¹ Explain this quote in the context of evolutionary “irrational, self-contradictory leaps of faith.”
9. Comment on this analysis from Stephen M. Barr, “The believing Jew or Christian does not feel the need to be embarrassed when materialists attack religion as ‘anti-scientific’ or irrational. For he regards his own beliefs as not less but far more rational than those of the materialist. He regards them as providing a fuller, more coherent, and more sensible picture of reality. A picture in which the existence of the universe is not merely some colossal accident, in which human life has both purpose and meaning, in which ideas about truth and falsehood and good and evil are more than mere electro-chemical responses in our brains, and in which the beauty, harmony, and order of the universe, which science has helped us to see more clearly than ever before, are recognized as the product of a wisdom and a reason that transcends our own.”²
10. Explain why naturalists oppose the Biblical Christian assertion that Christianity is objective truth.
11. Explain why it is especially critical that Christian young people understand that Christianity is not just an “emotional” experience; the full-orbed and comprehensive Christian faith is objective truth.

CHAPTER 8: DARWINS OF THE MIND

1. Explain the philosophy of pragmatism.
2. Explain the mind/matter difference between Darwinism and Theism.
3. Explain why, for Darwinists, progress for man is equivalent to environmental adaptation.
4. Comment on this statement, “Truth is what works.”
5. Explain the “kernel of truth” found in pragmatism.
6. Explain the basic thrusts of the Enlightenment.
7. Explain the basic thrusts of Romanticism.
8. Explain empiricism.
9. Explain utilitarianism.
10. Explain Hegel’s idealism.
11. Explain how the dualism between the Enlightenment and Romanticism are reflected in the university curriculum.
12. Explain how pragmatists, used the model provided by Darwin, tried to resolve this dualism and, thereby, reunify all knowledge.
13. Explain how Marxism made use of Hegel’s ideas.
14. What is determinism? How did the Enlightenment engender this philosophy?
15. Explain pragmatic indeterminism.
16. Explain how pragmatism impacted any two of the following: (1) Theology, (2) Law, (3) Education, (4) Philosophy.
17. If mind is the result of evolutionary process, then, according to Darwinism, how can objectively trust any theory of man, including Darwinism?

¹ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *By What Standard?* (Tyler, TX: Thoburn Press, [1958] 1983), pp. 61-62.

² Stephen M. Barr, *Modern Physics and Ancient Faith* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2003), pp. 17-18.

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18. Explain how pragmatism ultimately leads to truth by “majority vote” or, worse yet, “truth by the muzzle of a gun.”
19. Explain how objective truth and meaning is possible *only* in a world that Biblical Christianity posits.

SECTION 3: HOW WE LOST OUR MINDS

CHAPTER 9: WHAT’S SO GOOD ABOUT EVANGELICALISM?

1. Explain the importance in the Christian life of linking objective truths with subjective experience.
2. Explain the two sided nature of the evangelical movement.
3. Briefly describe both the good news and the bad news about the populist wing of evangelicalism in terms of the impact of the First Great Awakening in American history.
4. Resolve the false dichotomy that separates heart from the head.
5. Explain the difference between individualism and community (covenantalism). Comment on the dangers of absolutizing either.

CHAPTER 10: WHEN AMERICA MET CHRISTIANITY – GUESS WHO WON?

1. Cite several ways in which democracy as a political philosophy entered the American church.
2. Explain the positive and negative aspects of “primitivism.”
3. Explain what Charles Malik means by the “danger of anti-intellectualism.”
4. Explain popular evangelicalism view of the church. Contrast this view with the older perception (i.e., reflecting classical republicanism).
5. Explain why the “Arminian message” fit the experience of American evangelicals in the early 19th century.
6. Did pragmatism as a philosophy portend evangelical pragmatism? Explain why or why not.
7. Explain the reason for the rise of evangelical “personality cults.”
8. Explain the impact of Charles Finney on evangelical pragmatism.
9. Explain why mere “religion of heart” was incapable of sustaining the attacks on the Christian faith in the 19th century, notably from Darwinism, and ultimately led to truncated fundamentalism.

CHAPTER 11: EVANGELICALS’ TWO-STORY TRUTH

1. Explain “Common Sense realism” and why it became popular in 19th century America.
2. Explain the weaknesses of the Baconian method applied to Scriptural hermeneutics.
3. Explain what the Reformer’s meant by the term “Sola Scriptura.”
4. Explain the error of absolutizing Baconian induction (empiricism) as the method of obtaining scientific knowledge.
5. Explain why it is impossible to come to any field of knowledge with a mental “blank slate.”
6. Explain how Baconianism reinforced the two-story division of truth. Cite examples from ethics, Darwinism, and education.
7. Relate how, starting in the late 19th century, Common Sense realism impacted two strands of apologetical thinking.
8. Explain how Francis Schaeffer applied these two strands in his late 20th century apologetical methods.
9. What is the revelational *connection* tying the rational thoughts of the human mind to the empirical realities of the physical world? Explain why it is impossible for Darwinism to account for this connection.
10. Explain why, for the non-believer, his worldview gives no *basis* for believing in cause-and-effect regularities.
11. Explain why *only* Biblical Christianity can account for the irreducible experience of personhood.

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12. Explain the Scriptural basis for love and community.
13. Explain the place of exposing “cognitive dissonance” in evangelism.

CHAPTER 12: HOW WOMEN STARTED THE CULTURE WAR

1. Summarize this chapter in terms of how the two-story division of truth as impacted the relationships between men and women.
2. What negative impact did the Industrial Revolution have on the structure and function of the family?
3. Explain how feminization of the church turned Biblical Christianity into churchianity (i.e., ecclesiastical absolutism).
4. Explain how the “manly men” concept of the late 19th and early 20th centuries emancipated men from familial responsibilities.
5. Explain methods by which Christians can truly and effectively reconstitute the home in terms of its Scriptural structure and priorities.

SECTION 4: WHAT NEXT? LIVING IT OUT

CHAPTER 13: TRUE SPIRITUALITY AND CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

1. Explain why it is critical to both think *and* live a full-orbed Biblical Christianity in the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. Comment on this statement, “Many people think that spirituality is all about becoming emotionally intimate with God.”
3. Define Biblically what it means to be “spiritually intimate with God.”
4. Explain the principle of “fruit-bearing” in terms of John 12:24.
5. Present a Biblical balance between the “theology of the cross” and the “theology of glory.”
6. Explain why it is so easy to split right belief from right practice.
7. Explain Littell’s statement, “... the misguided piety of revivalist Protestantism ... gave the first great impetus to state colleges and universities.”
8. Cite examples of doing the Lord’s work with the “arm of the flesh.”
9. Develop a Biblical Christian perspective on one of the following: (1) Marketing, (2) Money, (3) Managing a company or organization, (4) Journalism.
10. Explain Schaeffer’s comment, “... with God there are no little people.”
11. Define Biblical Christian leadership.
12. What is the defining characteristic of the Christian faith and life before a “watching world”?

APPENDIX 1: HOW AMERICAN POLITICS BECAME SECULARIZED

1. Explain how political thought became secularized in history.
2. Explain the Hobbesian view of political order.
3. Explain the Lockean view of political order.
4. Explain the Rousseauian view of political order.
5. Explain why the Puritans in early American history accepted the social contract theories of Locke?
6. Why must the political order be founded upon the Sovereignty of God?

APPENDIX 2: MODERN ISLAM AND THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT

1. Explain the emanation theory of Plotinus.
2. Explain how the theories of Plotinus resonate with Hindu or Eastern pantheism.

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3. What is neo-Platonism?
4. Explain how neo-Platonism infiltrated subsequent thinkers.
5. Explain the New Age movement in the context of the theories of Plotinus.
6. Explain how the God of Islam differs from the God of the Scripture. Cite several examples of the practical implications of this difference.
7. Explain how the successful television show “Touched by an Angel” is symptomatic of the vague, generic spiritualism that is engulfing our culture.

APPENDIX 3: THE LONG WAR BETWEEN MATERIALISM AND CHRISTIANITY

1. Define the philosophy of materialism.
2. Explain the connection between Darwinism and materialism.
3. Explain how a Christian should view “all things material.”

APPENDIX 4: ISMS ON THE RUN: PRACTICAL APOLOGETICS AT L’ABRI

1. Explain how one’s worldview must comport with nature of reality.
2. Explain how determinism does *not* comport with nature of reality.
3. Explain how subjectivism does *not* comport with nature of reality.
4. Explain how relativism does *not* comport with nature of reality.