

WAR OF THE WORLDVIEWS #8

“What is Truth?”

I. Welcome Back to the War Zone

A. Review

1. We are living in a world of warfare: the war against terrorism; race wars, gender wars; class warfare; but the real war today is a culture war; a war between different worldviews!

“A worldview is the total of answers people give to the most important questions of life.”

Professor Ronald Nash

a. How did this world come to be? Naturalism says it evolved. The biblical worldview says, “in the beginning, God...

b. What is man? Evolution says man is an advanced animal, an “ape in trousers”; the biblical worldview says God created man in His own image, after His own likeness.

c. Why is there so much evil in this world? Socialism says it’s the gap between rich and poor, wealth needs to be redistributed; or a lack of education; or unfulfilled sexuality; but the biblical worldview says the problem with the world is sin.

2. Christians are losing our country’s culture wars because...

Only 19% of Christians in the United States have a Christian worldview.

Barna Research

a. Fewer than 1 in 5 professing American Christians have a biblical worldview! 80% of churchgoers have no comprehensive system of beliefs that can answer all the important questions of life, including our subject today, a question posed by Pontius Pilate at the trial of Jesus Christ...

37 Pilate therefore said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have

**come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth
hears My voice."**

38 Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?"

John 18:36-38 NASB

3. The spirit of Pontius Pilate is prominent in many people today; they have a cynical attitude toward the concept of truth and a wondering if anyone can ever know what it is. What is truth?

"Try asking this on a university campus and you're likely to receive laughter, scorn, and derision. The concept of truth has clearly fallen on hard times, and the consequences of rejecting it are ravaging human society. So let's go back to the starting point and answer the question: What is truth?"

John MacArthur

4. The word "truth", like the word "knowledge" is difficult to define without using the word itself because we rely on it almost every moment of every day and it's so "close" to us. The dictionary says...

Truth

That which conforms to fact or reality; a statement that conforms to reality.

5. Truth is, well, just *true*! The opposite of truth is lies.

B. The Power of a Lie

1. Lies are powerful things! The Bible teaches us that all the ills of human history come from man's original sin in the Garden of Eden; the sin of believing the serpent's lie...

"Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Genesis 3

a. This is what's wrong with the world!

People want to be like God

People want to define truth for themselves

2. The power of believing a lie brought down the human race; and evil men use the power of lies to bring them to power....

a. Adolf Hitler rose to power on the lie that the German people were the master race, superior to all others, and destined to rule the world...

**"The great masses of the people will more easily fall victim to a big lie than a small one."
Adolf Hitler**

b. The nation of Germany believed his big lie; and the result was the extermination of 6 ½ million Jews and another 60 million dead in WWII!

**"Make the lie big, make it simple. Keep saying it, and eventually they will believe it."
Adolf Hitler**

3. Today we live in an era of fake news in the mass media; a culture where one lie on Facebook or Twitter can mislead or deceive millions of people in a matter of moments. As Hitler's mortal enemy Winston Churchill said...

**"A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on."
Winston Churchill**

4. The great lie great lie going round the world today is a worldview that attacks the very nature of truth itself; it infects our college campuses and undermines the foundations of our social system. And it has a name.

II. Know Your Enemy!

A. Postmodernism

**"A new worldview is emerging, a worldview that calls into question all traditional notions of truth, structure and reality. It is called postmodernism."
Gary DeMar, "Thinking Straight in a Crooked World"**

1. This is a worldview; a system of thinking that denies the existence of objective or absolute truth. Christian author Jack Zavada defines it well...

"Postmodernism is a (worldview) that says absolute truth does not exist. It maintains that all viewpoints are equally valid. In today's society, postmodernism has led to relativism, the idea that all truth is relative."

2. To the postmodern mind, ultimate truth is unknowable; nothing can be finally defined as truth because truth is subjective. What may be true for me may not be true for you. Josh McDowell helps us here...

“This is where you get the popular phrase, ‘If it’s true for you wonderful. But it’s not true for me’. But without an external reference point, all values, beliefs, lifestyles, and claims to truth are equal. And if you say otherwise, you’re a bigot—intolerant, anti-multicultural and anti-diversity.”

Josh McDowell

a. Another example is the familiar phrase...

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

b. In other words, what may be beautiful to you may not be beautiful to me. In other words, there is really no such thing as beauty except as you or I define it so. In his book, “Thinking Straight in a Crooked World”, Gary DeMar asks...

“Beauty is in the eye of the beholder”? Its message is that objective standards for beauty do not exist and that virtue is arbitrarily defined by individuals.’

“The implication of this phrase—the supremacy of subjectivity and relativism—is becoming the worldview of many Americans today.

c. If beauty is only in the eye of the beholder, beauty only exists as I define it. This is how the postmodernist deals with truth; there is no universal standard of truth; what’s true for you may not be true for me; so there is no final answer to Pontius Pilate’s question, “What is truth?”

“Modern society generally believes that truth, as well as beauty, is in the eyes of the beholder. Truth is not objective, something that exists *apart* from us; rather, truth is what works *for* us. This emerging perspective denies *standards* and argues that truth is relative to individuals and cultures.”

Gary DeMar, “Thinking Straight in a Crooked World”

d. In other words, what once was a sin may not be a sin in our day; what once was true may no longer be true; moral standards change; truth evolves.

e. The popular English contemporary artist Tracey Emin speaks for her generation....

“What is truth? Truth doesn’t really exist. Who is going to judge whether my experience of an incident is more valid than yours? No one can be trusted to be the judge of that.”

Tracey Emin, English Contemporary Artist

3. The rejection of absolute truth spills over into the religious world. Jack Zavada says...

”Postmodernism begins with the rejection of absolute truth, which then leads to a loss of distinctions in matters of religion and faith, and culminates in a philosophy of religious pluralism that says no faith or religion is objectively true and therefore no one can claim his or her religion is true and another is false.”

Jack Zavada

a. Now you know why our country is so divided over issues of morality, ethics and politics; and why the Christian church is in decline.

4. No wonder you send your Christian kids off to college and they come home 4 years later with a fractured faith and a postmodern worldview!

“Postmodernism is ‘anti-worldview’. It denies the existence of any universal truth and questions every worldview, especially any that claim to be universal in application. Yet even as postmodernism denies all worldviews, it is itself a worldview.”

Gary DeMar

5. The postmodernist denies universal truth. The biblical worldview begins with Jesus Christ, who testified to Pilate that He had come to “bear witness of the truth”, which implies that there IS such a thing as “the truth”; Jesus speaks objective, universal truth that applies to everyone and exists outside of what any individual thinks about it!

**Truth is truth even if no one believes it.
A lie is a lie even if everyone believes it.**

a. $2 + 2 = 4$ is truth. Objective truth. It does not change. The fact you may not think it is true does not change the truth of it.

b. As the great theologian Elvis Presley once said...

**“Truth is like the sun. You can shut it out for a time, but it ain’t going away.”
Elvis Presley**

B. The Truth That Ain’t Going Away: Jesus is Lord

1. Christians can’t win the culture wars if we cannot confront the postmodern mind with the one thing that most offends it; something Jesus said in John 14:6...

“I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except by Me. (John 14:6)

a. 3 out of 4 Americans claim to be Christian; so how do these Barna survey results make sense?

- **62% of all Americans believe that all religious faiths teach the same lessons about life.**
 - **While 60% of all Americans believe that the Bible is totally accurate in all its teachings, 70% believe there are no absolutes!**
- George Barna, “Absolute Confusion: How Our Moral and Spiritual Foundations are Eroding in this Age of Change”**

2. Translation: The church is losing the battle right now. But we can still win the war if we can get God’s people willing to fight for the truth.

a. George Orwell, the British novelist, wrote great books like War of the Worlds and The Time Machine. He was not a Christian. But he did get this right....

**“During times of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act.”
George Orwell**

b. Jesus told the truth; they crucified Him for it. Are willing to tell the truth?

3. I believe in “lifestyle evangelism”-being a friend to sinners; showing kindness; taking a real interest in others.

a. None of us want people to think we Christians are legalistic or judgmental. BUT AT SOME POINT WE HAVE TO BE WILLING TO STAND UP FOR THE TRUTH, EVEN AT THE RISK OF BEING DISLIKED!

“The further a society drifts from the truth, the more it will hate those that speak it.”

George Orwell

4. Jesus said knowing the truth will make you free. But human nature avoids the truth because it can be painful.

“The truth will set you free, but first it will make you miserable.”

President James A. Garfield

5. No one was more loving than the Apostle Paul; but the Galatian churches had fallen into error and Paul had to give them strong correction; some didn't like it.

“Have I now become your enemy because I tell you the truth?”

Galatians 4:16

6. This same Paul taught us to “speak the truth in love”; (Ephesians 4:15); we have to speak the truth in the right spirit. Christian activist Shane Claiborne says...

“My goal is to speak the truth in love. There are a lot of people speaking the truth with no love; but there are a lot of people talking about love without much truth.”

Shane Claiborne

a. A good goal. Don't speak the truth without love. But confront those who speak about love without truth. But how do we do it?

III. Close

A. How Do We Persuade the Postmodern Mind?

#1. We need to love the truth ourselves!

a. The brilliant 17th century French theologian Blaise Pascal said...

“Truth is so obscure in these times, and falsehood is so established, that unless we love the truth, we cannot know it.”

Blaise Pascal

b. We don't need to defend the truth; we need to speak it!

“The truth is like a lion. You don't have to defend it. Let it loose and it will defend itself.”

Saint Augustine

#2. We must understand the times we live in and what we're up against.

a. The postmodern mind says there is no absolute truth and so we must consider every person's belief as equally valid as our own. But they don't live up to their own standards!

“Postmodernism says that all beliefs must be tolerated—except for the belief that denies all beliefs be tolerated.”

Gary DeMar, Thinking Straight in a Crooked World

b. In other words, the postmodern mind requires us to accept every one's opinion of the truth as true but denies the Christian his opinion that Christ is the only truth!

“Postmodernism is at war with the Christian worldview. Its goal is power for man apart from God—the rejection of any universal truth, whether it is history, or logic, or Christ.”

Gary DeMar, Thinking Straight in a Crooked World

#3. The postmodern position is a lie. It is indefensible; it falls on its own sword.

a. They say to us:

“Beauty is in the eye of the beholder”

“It may be true for you but it's not true for me.”

They are saying...

“There is no such thing as absolute truth”!

b. But we say to them: “If there is no such thing as absolute truth then how can you say there is no such thing as absolute truth? You are denying the existence of absolute truth by making a statement of absolute truth!”

c. No absolute truth? Get real!

- The whole world runs on $2 + 2 = 4$
- Every nation in the world has laws against stealing
- No person on earth admires the coward, the drunkard or the rapist

d. I never cared for the TV show “The X Files”; but I love the show’s motto...

THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE

And His name is Jesus!

He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life!

COMMUNION & COMMISSION

The church is “the pillar and ground of the truth”.
We must speak the truth-because the souls of men are at stake!

“I would rather have thousands to say to me at the judgement, ‘we heard you preach and you hurt our feelings’, than to have just one lost soul say, ‘I heard you preach but you did not tell me the truth’” John T. Lewis (1876-1977)