

The background features a large, abstract circular pattern on the left side, composed of many concentric, slightly irregular blue and teal rings that create a tunnel-like effect. In the center of this tunnel, there is a bright, colorful lens flare or light burst with orange, red, and yellow hues. The right side of the image is a soft, out-of-focus background with warm, ethereal colors like orange, pink, and light blue, suggesting a sunset or sunrise sky.

# Worldview Thinking

Revisiting the Fundamental Orientations of Our Minds and Hearts



# Welcome!

We gladly welcome you to our 10-part series on *Worldview Thinking*. Our hope is that the transcendent and noble ideas about how worldviews are formed, embraced, and, subsequently, manifested in the behaviors of individuals, families, associations, and nations will help you take a fresh look at your own presuppositions, beliefs, and commitments. Our aim is far more than momentary curiosity; it is to foster an openness for re-evaluation and change in the sight of God Himself. We pray that this series will serve as a faithful guide for you as you make your journey through this life to the one to come.







## Part 3 Objective

To Understand How Worldviews Are Formed

# Introduction

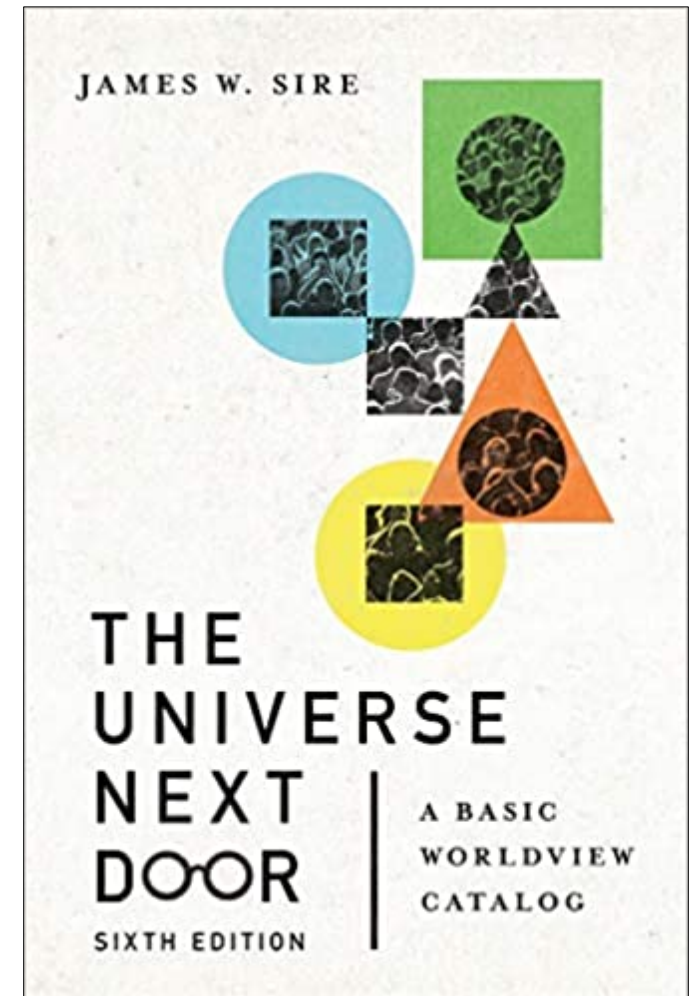
***In Part 1*** of this series, we began building a foundation for worldview analysis by considering 14 distinct but complementary definitions of this idea. The goal of that lecture was to ensure that we would have a general consensus on the meaning of the word *worldview* and to eliminate as many misunderstandings of the concept as possible.

***Then, in Part 2***, we acknowledged: (1) the universal truth that everyone has a worldview; (2) cited 9 reasons why understanding worldviews is so vitally important; (3) addressed the wide-spread and long-standing problem of anti-intellectualism; (4) graphically illustrated worldview differences; and (5) affirmed author Richard Weaver's noteworthy claim that *ideas have consequences*.

# James Sire's Definition of Worldview

“A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or unconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being.”

- James W. Sire (1933-2018)







Worldview Formation: What Are the Origins of Our Beliefs?

# The Origins of Our Beliefs

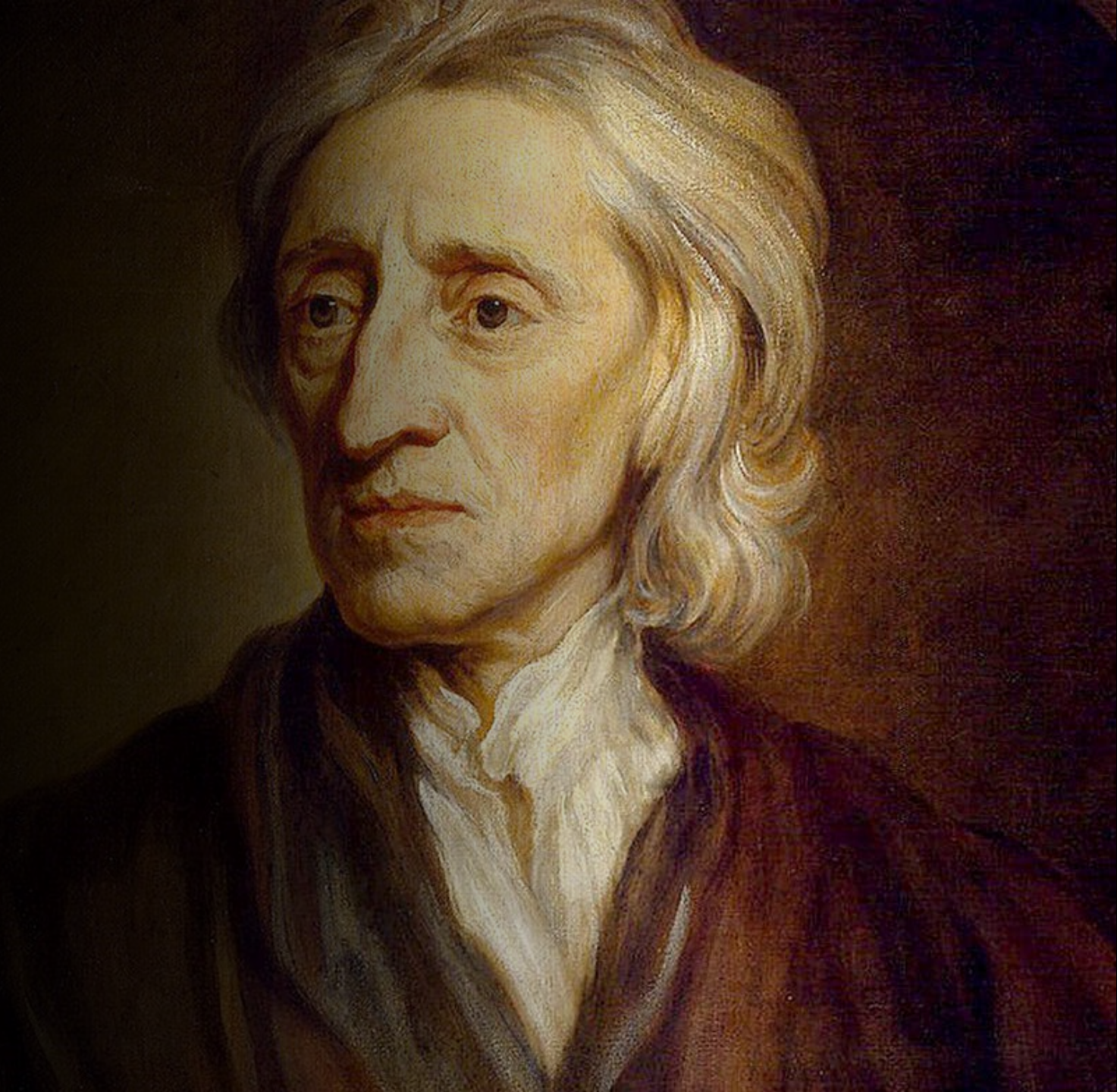
- God created man, male and female, in His image (Gen. 1:26-27).
- Thinking is a God-given capacity and gift. A competing theory is that every person is born without built-in mental content (*tabula rasa*, “blank slate” or “white paper”) and, therefore, that all knowledge comes from experience or perception (e.g., Aristotle, John Locke, etc.).
- God’s law is written on every person’s heart (Jer. 31:33). His eternal and infallible truth is the foundation of all of our thought and morality.
- God has revealed Himself to us through creation, conscience, His infallible Word, and through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

## John Locke (1632-1704)

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“All ideas come from Sensation or Reflection. Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas. How comes it to be furnished? Whence comes it by that vast store which the busy and boundless fancy of man has pointed on it with an almost endless variety? Whence has it all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I answer, in one word, EXPERIENCE.”

- John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*





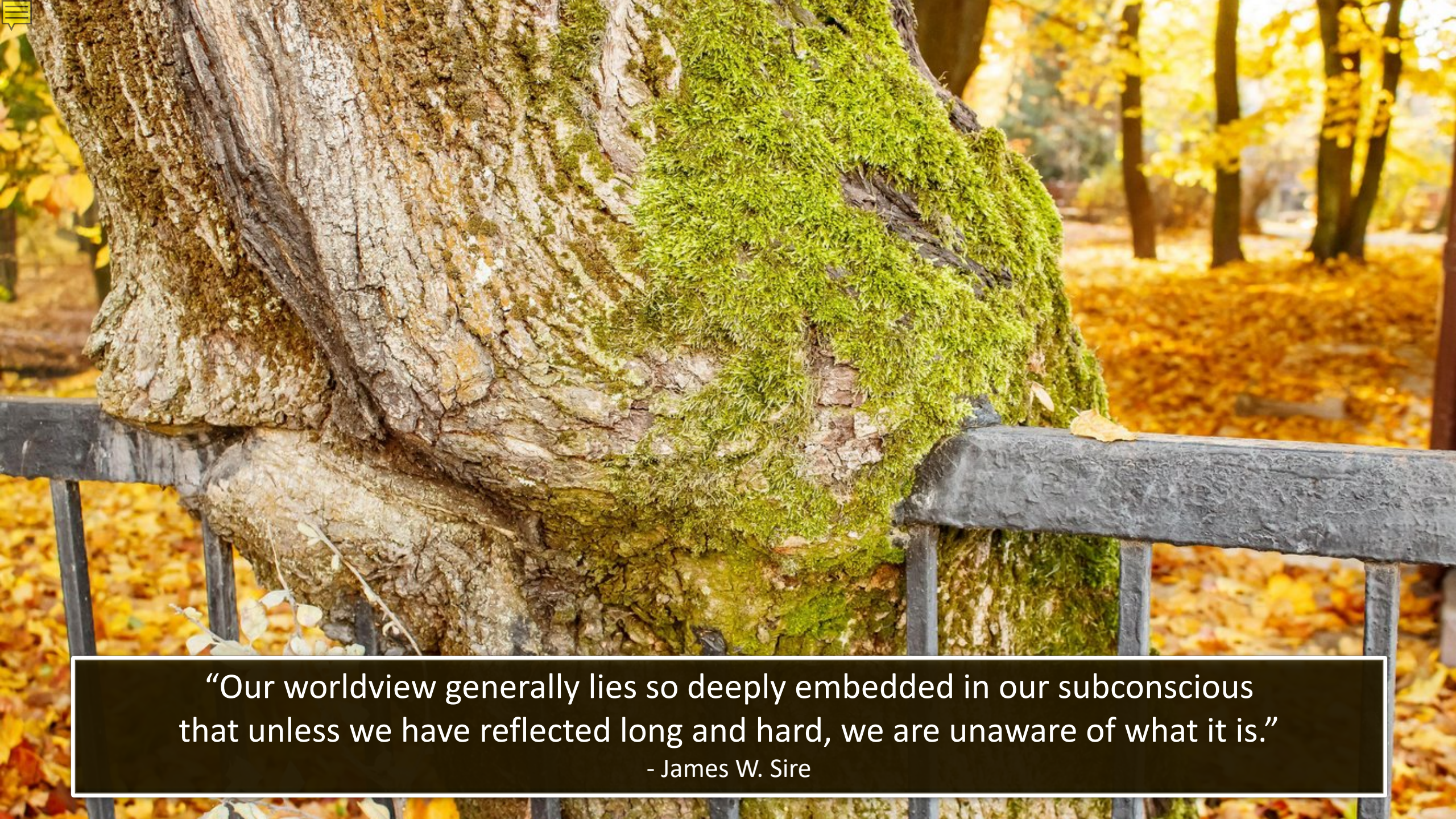
# The Origins of Our Beliefs

- From birth, education is an assumed part of life and is essential to growth and maturity. We are called to think *analogically* (God's thoughts after Him) rather than *univocally* (our own voice).
- Every human has been given dominion over the earth (the *Creation Mandate*) and must be prepared to be a faithful vicegerent to rule over all that God made. (Gen. 1:28).
- Every person is called to seek after, and to live in, wisdom (Prov. 1:1-7); to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.
- Beliefs instilled by our parents: "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6).

# The Origins of Our Beliefs

- Things we were taught in school (teachers, coaches, guest lecturers, media, etc.).
- Ideas we absorbed from our culture (art, music, theatre, movies, advertisements, TV, sports, Hollywood, politics, news media, etc.).
- Ideas we gained from reading (novels, biographies, non-fiction, journals, theology, philosophy, history, ethics, science, leadership, sermons, Great Books, politics, etc.).
- The things we learned from our life experiences.
- The things we learned from suffering, loss, and pain.





“Our worldview generally lies so deeply embedded in our subconscious that unless we have reflected long and hard, we are unaware of what it is.”

- James W. Sire





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“Wherever you look today, the new concept of truth holds the field. The consensus about us is almost monolithic, whether you review the arts, literature, or just simply read the newspapers and magazines...On every side you can feel the stranglehold of this new methodology – and by ‘methodology’ we mean the way we approach truth and knowing. It is like suffocating in a particularly bad London fog. And just as fog cannot be kept out by walls or doors, so this consensus comes in around us, till the room we live in is no longer distinct, and yet we hardly realize what has happened.”

- Francis A. Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*

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“For any of us to be fully conscious intellectually, we should not only be able to detect the worldviews of others but be ***aware*** of our own – why it is ours and why, in light of so many options, we think it is true” (James Sire).



# John Henry Newman (1801-1890)

**“THE PERFECTION OF THE INTELLECT** which is the result of Education, and its beau [beautiful] ideal, to be imparted to individuals in their respective measures, is the clear, calm, accurate vision and comprehension of all things, as far as the finite mind can embrace them, each in its place, and with its own characteristics upon it. It is almost prophetic from its knowledge of history; it is almost heart-searching from its knowledge of human nature; it has almost supernatural charity from its freedom from littleness and prejudice; it has almost the repose of faith, because nothing can startle it; it has almost the beauty and harmony of heavenly contemplation, so intimate is it with the eternal order of things and the music of the spheres.”



## The Benefits of Using Our Imaginations & Engaging in Rational Thought

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- Promotes personal joy (as opposed to succumbing to discouragement or depression).
- Deepens human longing (rather than abandoning hope).
- Strengthens our faith in God (when the ground around us seems to be so unstable).
- Builds a Christian worldview by which we see the world.





## How Do We Begin?

“In formation, the Christian mind requires persistent obedience to God, practicing what we learn from studying Scripture and reading Christian books. This is what Os Guinness calls ‘**the responsibility of knowledge.**’ If we think we know yet do not do, then from a purely biblical sense we do not really know.”





# How Do We Begin?

1. By lamenting over the deficiencies in our everyday discipleship.
2. By being humble. Developing a Christian worldview begins with an attitude of humility.
3. By opening our eyes and being observant and vigilant.
4. By being repentant: “We have betrayed the Great Commandment to love God with our minds” (Guinness).
5. By offering our minds up to God and asking for wisdom.
6. By seeking God’s restoration from the *noetic* effects of sin.
7. By recognizing that whatever worldview we adopt will be limited.



# How Do We Begin?

8. By “giving up what seems like our very selves to find our true selves” (Guinness).
9. By actively loving God with our minds. “The first great commandment is not optional....To the extent God has given us minds, we must love God with all our minds and in all of our lives in a way that is shaped decisively by him” (Guinness).
10. By consciously moving away from the “idiot culture” (Carl Bernstein).
11. By moving away from the shallowest of texts. Take the high road and read challenging works to the glory of God.





# How Do We Begin?

12. By refusing to assume that we can know anything exhaustively.
13. By moving beyond specialization and reading broadly across many disciplines.
14. By recognizing that “television transforms even the life of the mind into entertainment” (Guinness).
15. By listening to Jesus: “But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, ‘Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man’” (Mk. 8:33).



# Eight Essential Worldview Questions

1. What is prime reality – the really real?
2. What is the nature of external reality (that is, the world around us)?
3. What is a human being?
4. What happens to a person at death?
5. Why is it possible to know anything at all?
6. How do we know what is right and wrong?
7. What is the meaning of human history?
8. What personal, life-orienting, core commitments are consistent with this worldview?





## What Does It Mean to “Think Christianly”?

“Thinking Christianly is thinking by Christians about anything and everything in a consistently Christian way – in a manner that is shaped, directed, and restrained by the truth of God’s Word and God’s Spirit.”

- Os Guinness