

The background of the slide is an abstract composition. On the left side, there are several concentric circles in shades of blue and teal, creating a tunnel-like perspective that draws the eye towards the center. In the middle of this tunnel, there is a bright, colorful light source that appears to be a small explosion or a burst of energy, with hues of orange, red, and yellow. The right side of the image is a soft, out-of-focus background with a mix of blue, teal, and orange tones, suggesting a sky or a nebula. A semi-transparent dark grey horizontal band runs across the middle of the image, serving as a backdrop for the title and subtitle.

Worldview Thinking

Revisiting the Fundamental Orientations of Our Minds and Hearts



Welcome!

We trust you are doing well and are glad you joined us for Part 5 of our series on *Worldview Thinking*. The objective of this online experience is to provide you with important tools by which you can become proficient in analyzing your own worldview and, subsequently, in detecting the worldviews of others. Ultimately, we want to help you gain a greater self-awareness about how you see the world as well as the ability to interact compassionately with others who embrace a different set of presuppositions and, therefore, a worldview that is counter to Christian theism.

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Introduction

From the beginning of this series, we have affirmed that everyone has a worldview and operates from a set of assumptions or presuppositions about the world. No one is exempt from this absolute connection between the mind and heart and the behavior which follows. As we have claimed in our previous lectures, what we believe becomes foundational for the way we live our lives. Our behavior emanates from the heart, from the thoughts we think, and the convictional presuppositions we embrace. Jesus taught that “what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart” (Mt. 15:18). What we believe, then, may eventually harden into convictions, whether they are true or not, or whether they are consistent or inconsistent.

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Even when others challenge some of these long-held beliefs, they are not easily dislodged from our minds or our hearts. After all, we have held them for such a long time, and they may even seem to “work” for us (pragmatism). If, however, we will maintain an attitude of humility and an openness to reconsider our deeply held convictions; and if we will pursue after “true truth” with all of our hearts; and if we will seek for wisdom as we would for gold or silver; and if we will grow in our curiosity about God’s world (general revelation) and Word (special revelation); and if we will seek first God’s kingdom; then, though it may be a bit unsettling to admit that we have been wrong about matters that we previously thought were true and right and good, our

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worldviews will begin to change and shape the way we speak and live in the watching world. Our lives will gradually be conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29) and we will, more and more, have “the mind of Christ” (I Cor. 2:16).

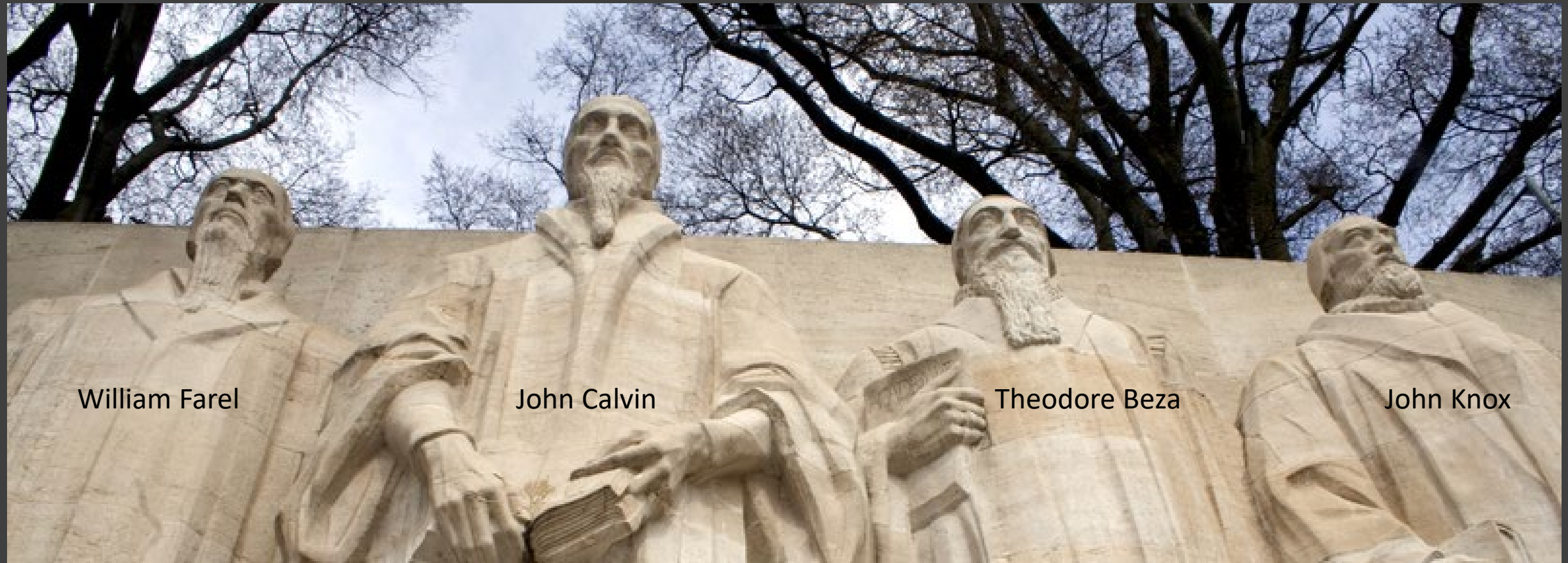
As one small example, I used to hold a wrong interpretation of Proverbs 22:6. “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.” It seemed clear to me that if any parent brought up a child in the “right” way, he wouldn’t depart from what he had learned in his developmental years when he became an adult. But when studying under one of my seminary professors, he pointed me to the Hebrew text and made it clear that it should be translated in this

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way: “Train up a child according to *his* way.” In other words, parents should be *students* of their children and learn **their** natures, **their** bents, **their** giftedness, **their** wiring, **their** desires, etc. Bring them up according to *their* way. This, of course, changes everything when God gives a couple a child or children and charges them with the responsibility of raising them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. There is nothing like holding on to **our** certainties – that is, until our eyes are opened to see things as they were truly intended to be seen. Ultimately, a **teachable person** (a necessity in biblical discipleship) will rejoice over learning the truth about **any** matter. In short, this is what my seminary faculty did for me. Many aspects of my worldview were turned upside down in three years. I was blessed.

So...About Today

We are now turning the corner and opening the door to worldview analysis. That is, today is the day that we will take an investigative journey into our hearts in order that we might begin to “see” our own worldviews. We will proceed slowly, especially for any who may have never done this kind of personal work before. The reason is that sometimes what we discover can be quite painful. Let’s be sure to remember that ALL of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). But let’s also remember the grace and mercy of God towards us in Christ, and that “all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (II Tim. 3:16-17).



William Farel

John Calvin

Theodore Beza

John Knox

International Monument to the Reformation ♦ Geneva, Switzerland

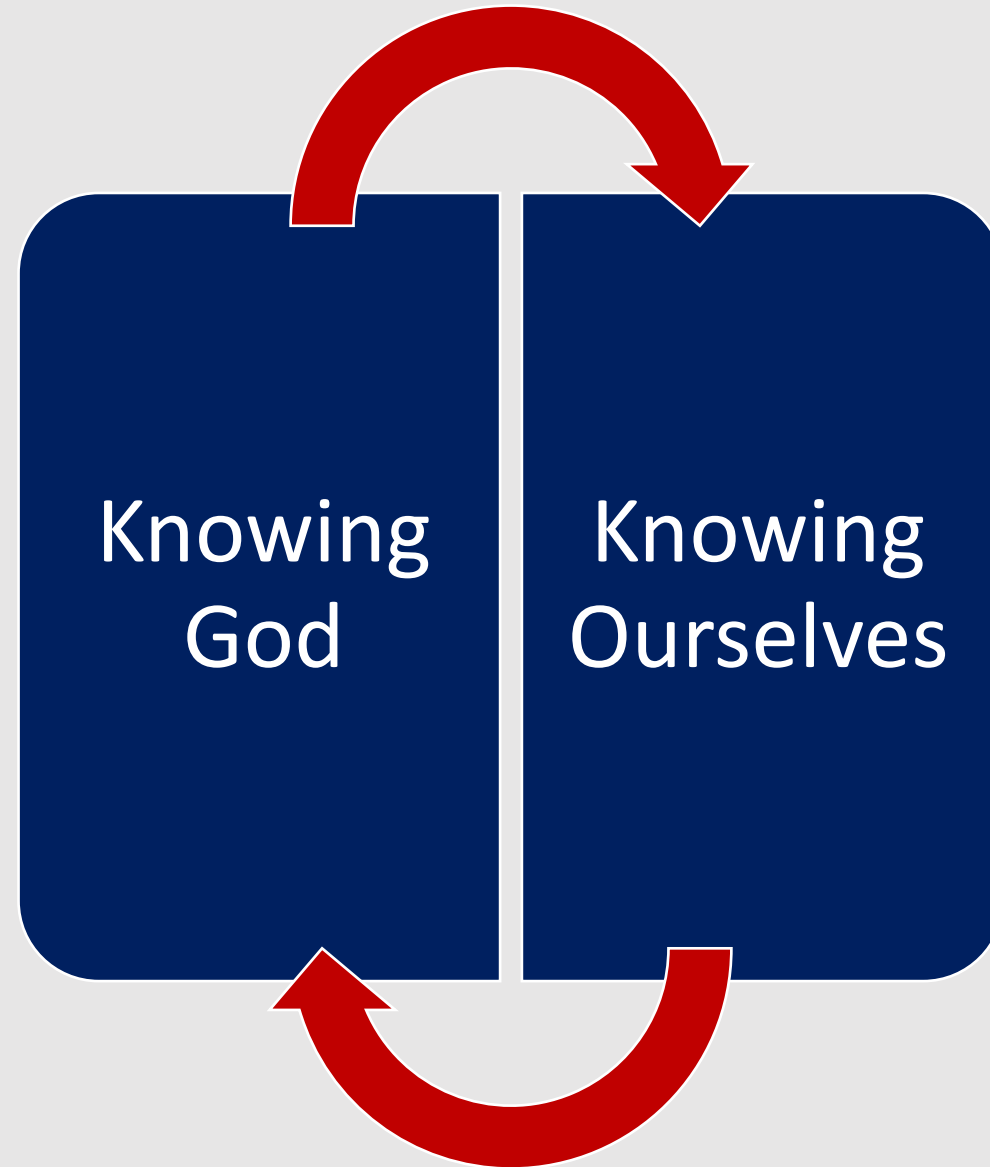
Calvin: On the Knowledge of God and Ourselves

“Our wisdom, in so far as it ought to be deemed true and solid wisdom, consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves. But as these are connected together by many ties, it is not easy to determine which of the two precedes, and gives birth to the other. For, in the first place, no man can survey himself without



Calvin: On the Knowledge of God and Ourselves

forthwith turning his thoughts towards the God in whom he lives and moves; because it is perfectly obvious, that the endowments which we possess cannot possibly be from ourselves; nay, that our very being is nothing else than subsistence in God alone...Every person, therefore, on coming to the knowledge of himself, is not only urged to seek God, but is also led as by the hand to find him. On the other hand, it is evident that man never attains to a true self-knowledge until he has previously contemplated the face of God, and come down after such contemplation to look into himself...Men are never duly touched and impressed with a conviction of their significance, until they have contrasted themselves with the majesty of God.”





Solomon's Simile

Proverbs 20:5

“The purpose in a man’s heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out” (ESV).

“A person's thoughts are like water in a deep well, but someone with insight can draw them out” (Good News Translation).

“For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him?” (I Cor. 2:11).



Recognition that Something Exists

Awareness of Personal Presuppositions

Knowledge of Divergent Worldviews

Effective Communication with Others



The Stages of Personal Discovery

When you dip your bucket into the first level you come to what is called a “***recognition that something exists***” (there is something *there* rather than nothing). With time and interest, you begin to consider what you truly believe and become keenly “**aware of your own presuppositions**” (a personal commitment to understand who you are and how you live). Next comes gaining a “**knowledge of divergent worldviews**” through reading, studying, observing, listening, and experiencing (this is a life-long endeavor). Finally, as you continue to learn how to think *worldviewishly*, you engage in “**effective communication with others**” in order to compassionately and clearly contrast their worldviews with the theistic worldview of Christianity (apologetics & sharing the gospel).

God and Our Secrets



Dr. Paul Tournier

1898-1986

Swiss Physician

“Before God, there is no secrecy, and this truth has considerable significance. The most powerful means of getting to know ourselves is to allow ourselves to be examined by God and to listen to what he has to say to us, for he knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows all our secrets.”



Eight Essential Worldview Questions

Our First Question: What Is Prime Reality – “The Really Real”?



What Is Prime Reality – The Really Real?

- Is it God, or the gods, or the material cosmos?
- If God is the answer, then further questions need to be answered. What is the basic character of God – personal or impersonal (if personal, one or many), omnipotent or limited, etc.
- “Prime reality is the infinite, personal God revealed in the Holy Scriptures. This God is triune, transcendent and immanent, omniscient, sovereign, and good” (James Sire).
- He is the source of all other reality.
- Dallas Willard: “The single most important thing in our mind is our idea of God and the associated images.”



Does God Exist?

But how can anyone know - one way or the other? Author John Blanchard understands the importance of the question *Does God exist?* “This is **the** question, and every debate about human life and death, and about the universe in which humanity lives and dies, ultimately revolves around it.” American philosopher Mortimer Adler said that “more consequences for thought and action follow from the affirmation or denial of God than from answering any other question.”

Both sides cannot be right, as Blanchard insists. “Either God exists, or he does not exist. There is no point in looking for a compromise, a kind of halfway house in which both sides can live in agreement. To say that



The Law of Non-Contradiction

God *is* and at the same time *is not* is a crass violation of the law of contradiction. The truth must lie on one side or the other – and to dismiss the question as irrelevant or unanswerable changes nothing.”

Where are you on this question? What do you believe? And how did you arrive at your conclusions? What methods did you use? Are you certain that what you believe is true?

Whatever you believe, over your lifetime you have constructed your own worldview, the lens through which you view the world. From this worldview, you move and live, speak and decide, work and play, behave and relate, and interpret the world in which you live.

Prime Reality: Other Possibilities

| Canaanite gods (general) | Magic | Judaism | New Age |
|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Golden Calf (Aaron) | Soothsaying | Deism | Postmoderism |
| Metal gods (gold/silver) | Teraphim (ancestral) | Rationalism | Marxism |
| Moloch (Ammonites) | Islamic Theism | Intuition | Scientism |
| Baal (Canaanite) | Buddhism | Materialism | Secularism |
| Melkart (Phoenician) | Confucianism | Naturalism | Humanism |
| Astarte/Ashtoreth (Egypt) | Zodiac | Empiricism | Pragmatism |
| Chemosh (Moabites) | Nature gods | Nihilism | Positivism |
| Tammuz (Mesopotamia) | Nebo (Babylonian) | Existentialism | Pluralism |
| Horus the hawk (Egypt) | Nisroch (Assyrian) | Pantheism | Hedonism |
| Mythology | Platonism | Subjectivism | Relativism |

One Reason To Believe In God



C.S. Lewis
1898 - 1963

“There are all sorts of different reasons for believing in God, and here I’ll mention only one. It is this. Supposing there was no intelligence behind the universe, no creative mind. In that case nobody designed my brain for the purpose of thinking. It is merely that when the atoms inside my skull happen for physical or chemical reasons to arrange themselves in a certain way, this gives me, as a by-product, the sensation I call thought.

But if so, how can I trust my own thinking to be true? It's like upsetting a milk-jug and hoping that the way the splash arranges itself will give you a map of London. But if I can't trust my own thinking, of course I can't trust the arguments leading to atheism, and therefore have no reason to be an atheist, or anything else. Unless I believe in God, I can't believe in thought: so I can never use thought to disbelieve in God."



Yahweh's Commands About Other gods

- “You shall have **no other gods** before me” (Ex. 20:3; Dt. 5:7).
- “Pay attention to all that I have said to you, and make no mention of the names of other gods, nor let it be heard on your lips” (Ex. 23:13).
- “When my angel goes before you and brings you to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, and I blot them out, you shall not bow down to their gods nor serve them, nor do as they do, but you shall utterly overthrow them and break their pillars in pieces” (Ex. 23:23-24). “If you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you” (vs. 33). “...neither shall you serve their gods, for that would be a snare to you” (Dt. 7:16).

Yahweh's Commands About Other gods

- Aaron “received the gold from their hand...and made a golden calf” (Ex. 32:4). Moses: “This people have sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold” (Ex. 32:31).
- “You shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God” (Ex. 34:14). “You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you, for the Lord your God in your midst is a jealous God...” (Dt. 6:14-15).
- “You shall not make for yourself any gods of cast metal” (Ex. 34:17). “Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves any gods of cast metal: I am the Lord your God” (Lev. 19:4).

Yahweh's Commands About Other gods

- “And if you forget the Lord your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish” (Dt. 8:19).
- “Take care lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them” (Dt. 11:16).



Teraphim

- **Teraphim**, *n.* “A kind of idols or images, or an idol or image; apparently *esp.* household gods; an object of reverence and means of divination among the ancient Hebrews and kindred peoples” (OED).
- **Laban to Jacob:** “And now you have gone away because you longed greatly for your father’s house, but why did you steal **my gods?**” (Gen. 31:30).
- “For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination. He shakes the arrows; he consults the **teraphim**; he looks at the liver” (Ezek. 21:21).



Teraphim

- “Consulting the teraphim may have been a form of consulting the dead, if, as is probable, the teraphim were ancestral images, raised by superstition to the rank of household gods” (ISBE).
- **God:** “For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on **all the gods of Egypt** I will execute judgments: I am the Lord” (Ex. 12:12).



Laban Searches for His Teraphim

Jan Havickszoon Steen

1626-1679

Reclining Buddha

Wat Pho

Bangkok, Thailand

“All idols belong either to nature or to history. The whole creation falls into those two categories, and there is no other place to which man can turn to find a substitute for God. Any idol that is not an artifact of the natural world is an artifact of the social world.

- Herbert Schlossberg





G.K. Chesterton

“The Buddhist saint always has his eyes shut, while the Christian saint always has them very wide open....The Buddhist is looking with a peculiar intentness inwards. The Christian is staring with a frantic intentness outwards.”

“It is fitting that the Buddha be pictured with his eyes closed; there is nothing important to see” (Herbert Schlossberg).



The God of the Scriptures

“There is but one only, living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body parts, or passions; immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; and withal, most just, and terrible in His judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty” (*Westminster Confession*, Chapter II, Section 1).