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Lecture 2 of 12

KNOW ONE'S WORLDVIEW: STARTING POINT FOR DOING APOLOGETICS

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"People almost invariably arrive at their beliefs not on the basis of proof but on the basis of what they find attractive." ~ Blaise Pascal

I. Starting Point for Doing Apologetics: Seek to understand One's worldview:

- A. Everybody possesses a worldview.
- B. A worldview is a "habituated way of seeing and doing."
 - 1. A habit is to think, feel, desire, and act in such a way that you do not consciously will to do so, you just do it.
- C. A worldview is the sum-total of one's beliefs that direct one's behavior and actions. It is through one's worldview that one interprets the good, the bad, and the ugly.
- D. The beliefs that formulate one's worldview are foundational; there are none more basic than these.

II. Critical Components of One's Worldview:

- A. We can begin to understand one's worldview by understanding the following beliefs one possesses:
 - 1. One's view of God:
 - a. Theism: Infinite and personal God exists both beyond and in the universe.
 - b. Deism: An infinite God exists beyond the universe but not in it.
 - c. Pantheism: God is the universe.
 - d. Panentheism: God is in the universe.
 - e. Finite Godism: A Finite God exists both beyond and in the universe.
 - f. Polytheism: Multiple gods exists both beyond and in the universe.

- g. Atheism: No God exists.
 - 1) Old Atheism: God is an illusion but religion is good for you (e.g., John Dewey)
 - 2) New Atheism: God is an illusion but religion is bad for you; religion is poisonous to one's well-being (e.g., Richard Dawkins)
 - h. Soft Agnosticism: One does not know if God exists, but is open to where the evidence leads.
 - I. Hard Agnosticism: One cannot know whether God exists.
2. One's view of reality:
- a. False view: Naturalism: Only physical reality exists
 - b. False view: Material reality is an illusion
 - c. False view: We are the "creators" of reality
 - d. True view: Reality is both physical (natural) and spiritual (immaterial)
3. One's view of truth:
- a. False view: Nihilism: Ultimate truth does not exist; all is meaningless.
 - b. False view: Pragmatic test of truth as sole criterion: Truth is that which works.
 - c. False view: Coherence Test as sole criterion: Truth is that which coheres with other internal truth-claims. The greater the harmony between these statements, the more likely something is true.
 - d. False view: Relativism:
 - 1) Individual relativism: Truth is relative to "me."
 - 2) Cultural relativism: Truth is relative to a particular culture or local sub-group.

- e. Truth is that which corresponds with reality, identifies things as they actually are, can never fail, diminish, change or be extinguished, must be able to be expressed in logical propositions, and is sourced in the God of the Bible who is the Author of all Truth.
4. One's view of knowledge:
- a. Empiricism: Knowledge acquired through the five senses.
 - b. Rationalism: Knowledge acquired through logical reasoning.
 - c. Mysticism
 - d. Intuition/Innate
 - e. Revelation
 - f. Combination thereof.
5. One's view of humanity:
- a. Biological-chemical "machines" with no free will.
 - b. Material beings (evolved by time, energy, and chance).
 - c. Material/spiritual beings.
6. One's view of ethics (morality):
- a. Virtue ethics: an action is right if and only if it is what a virtuous person would do.
 - b. Deontological ethics: an action is right if and only if it is in accord with a moral rule or principle (s):
 - 1) Natural Law Theory.
 - 2) Kantian Ethics
 - c. Consequential ethics: an action is right if and only if it promote the best consequences:
 - 1) Egoism: What maximizes self-interest?
 - 2) Utilitarianism: The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few or the one.

- d. Relativism: Morality is relative to a particular person or culture (sub-group)
 - e. Nihilism: Morality is an authority structure. There is no absolute right or wrong; everything is ultimately meaningless; Nature is morality.
7. One's view of evil:
- a. False view: evil is an illusion.
 - b. False view: evil is making a painful choice.
 - c. False view: evil is a substance created by God
 - d. False view: evil is a meaningless term.
 - e. True view: evil is the corruption of something good.

III. How are these Worldview Beliefs Formed? Consider the following ways worldview beliefs are acquired:

- A. Informally (e.g., entertainment)
- B. Uncritically (e.g., embrace belief because it came from a certain personality)
- C. Over time (as we experience the good, the bad, and the ugly)
- D. Inter-generationally (e.g., father-figure to child)
- E. Intra-generationally (e.g., fraternity)
- F. Environment/situational setting: we feed of our environment and our environment feeds off of us. We are "affected" (not determined) by our setting (e.g., Amish).
- G. Habits.

IV. How Can One Analyze a Person's Worldview?

- A. Consider asking the following four questions (from Nancy Pearcey & Chuck Colson):
 - 1. Question of origins:
 - a. What are we?

- b. Where do we come from?
- 2. Question of sin:
 - a. What's gone wrong with the world?
- 3. Question of redemption:
 - a. What can be done to fix the problems in this world?

V. Conclusion:

- A. Everyone is inherently valuable. Treat people, no matter who they are, what they have done, or where they come from with humility and a clear conscience; everyone is made in God's image.
- B. Be a good listener: Be quick to listen and slow to speak.
- C. Study a person's non-verbal language. Observe their cues.
- D. Watch your non-verbal language. Be like Christ! Be controlled by the Holy Spirit, bearing the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).

VI. Recommended Sources:

- 1. Voddie Baucham, *Family Driven Faith*
- 2. William Lane Craig, *Hard Questions, Real Answers*
- 3. Chuck Colson and Nancy Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Then Live?*
- 4. Douglas Groothuis, *On Jesus*
- 5. Ronald Nash, *Faith and Reason*
- 6. Blaise Pascal, *Pensees*
- 7. Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth*
- 8. _____. *Saving Leonardo*
- 9. Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer*
- 10. James Sire, *Naming the Elephant*